

# The Shoemaker's Last

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By Don Morrill

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**Don Morrill**



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First Edition

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For my grandfather,  
Herbert Horace Weld

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## **Foreword**

The Shoemaker's Last is also a first story of a man who found his humanity in people and his art-trade as a world travelling Potter dedicated to his belief in the grandeur of communal possibilities inherent in the Love of Life.  
Who with his Japanese wife raised two brilliant sons gifted in their being true to their international natures.  
An outstanding example of following the Voice inside the ONE. A successful family in deeds.

Vincent Ferrini

3/1/2002

# Introduction

To write of one's beginnings is a formidable task. We surely are trapped between what we truly recall from the dim past and all of those memories which have been reinforced in the telling and re-telling, by ourselves as well as by our parents, friends, relatives, and passing strangers. Any remembrance must be a rationalization. No remembrance can be truly 'true.' There are bits and pieces we cannot recall as well as bits and pieces we prefer not to recall. There are old wounds we would not open, wounds to ourselves as well as to old friends.

The past has a way of softening one's memories of dedicated enemies. Age may also bring with it a softening, a forgetting, or at least an ignoring of ideas once firmly held in our youth. I believe we must guard against this tendency, else we simply continue our past mistakes and the past mistakes of contemporaries. A rejection of one's ideas ... never—of actions, yes.

My belief is that in early youth (given great good luck) all the universe is revealed to us. The germ of our best ideas, therefore, comes to us very early in life. They are the most mature of human attitudes arrived at by an unbiased experience. With great good fortune we may expand on them and bring them to fruition, discarding in the dustbin of history those ideas that do not contribute to maturity.

Can anyone believe that my hometown of Lynn, Massachusetts, a small city of fewer than 100,000 persons, housed ten movie theatres and three legitimate theatres?

One was a Theatre Comique supported by Italian immigrants treading the boards after working in the shoe factories for ten hours per day.

As I was writing this sentence, I heard that Sterling Holloway had died. He, Ed Wynn, and Andy Devine were film actors from my youth. Several years ago I felt badly that 'Hoot' Gibson was in Palms Hospital and I did not send him a 'Get Well' card. All of them gave me great pleasure as a child. When Henry Fonda, Charles Laughton, and Elsa Lanchester died, a part of my early childhood passed away with them. Surely, this is a part of growing up before the invention of television, when Mr. Edison's flickering machine was in its infancy and our radio required thirty pounds of wet battery to function for a few hours.

#### **A few words about a shoemaker's last:**

**A** 'last' is that hard wood sculpture of a foot upon which the various parts of a shoe are formed. The leather and the templated design come to the laster from the shoe designer. It is then carefully cut to fit the pre-designed pattern and pinned in place on the last. Finally, the formed shoe is removed and stitched, after which the sole is cut and stitched to the 'upper' forming the completed shoe.

Of all of the bench workers in the shoe factory, the 'laster' is most highly skilled but even he is not alone. The shoe is formed and made by many persons, each having his own special skill and contributing to the final shoe. As my grandfather, Herbert Horace Weld, was a laster, so his father was a shoemaker. Both of them worked in a period when craftsmen/workers were highly respected for their abilities. Lasters as well as other skilled persons went to work dressed in three-piece suits and wore detachable collars on their shirts.

The end of the nineteenth century was nearly the end of the period when individual workers owned their own tools. When they "downed tools," the factory closed its doors.

On into the twentieth century, however, although a few independent craftsmen still worked in the factory, (for example, typographers often had aprons in half-a-dozen print shops in Boston and often circulated among shops), the introduction of mass production and the interchangeability of parts replaced workers who owned their own tools. The last and his last in their original form became extinct.

{However, the general loss of the ownership of tools ('the means of production') was the most important loss every American worker sustained. Although these features may first have been introduced by 'Colt Arms,' they rapidly spread and became the basis of the success of the automobile and wage slavery}.

# 1

## The Beginning

One must make a beginning somehow. I was conceived at the end of World War One, almost immediately upon my mother's marriage to my father, who almost as immediately took off for parts unknown.

I was born in the small wooden lying-in house known as the White Cottage of the Lynn Hospital, where girls of suspicious wedlock (or no wedlock) were birthed. Apparently I was a scrawny child of no special account and was bottle-fed cow's milk. Although I have maintained no great interest in milk, the female breast has always been of interest. Almost at once I became a ward of the state of Massachusetts. Just as quickly we moved to a small gray house just behind the corner of Washington Street and Western Avenue.

At what age does memory truly begin? True though it may be, I do not remember directly loosening the rope which tied me to the porch bannister. I am told that I untied myself and trotted off down Washington Street wearing my little brown 'teddy bear' winter suit, and continued on down Washington street, crossing busy Essex Street by the Washington Street Baptist Church (our church at that time). I continued my trot all the way to Olympia Square which, years later, would be one of my haunts. The place where I bought my first pint of 4 Roses whisky at the age of sixteen.

Passing the Olympia Theatre, Andrew Street, home of both the Auditorium Theatre and the 'Garlic Opera,' a five cent movie inhabited by boys accompanied by older

brothers. “Brudda, i gudda pee,pee.” Don’t bother me, Tom Mix is just coming into sight.” Aisles running with piss and often the clank and crash of whisky bottles.

Oxford Street, Monroe Street. Washington becomes Central Avenue and Central Square. ‘Dad’ Berryman’s horses haul the great wagons over the cobbled streets as I trudge through the piss puddles and beneath the Boston & Maine railroad overpass. Down Union Street, crossing Washington Street again and finally entering the small restaurant owned by my grandmother and grandfather. “Grammy, I come to visit you and I’m tired.”

The foregoing is more than literary licence. I was three years old and the journey was two miles long. Not so. After consulting a map to refresh my memory, I realize the journey was perhaps slightly less than one mile. Can I believe even this?

We moved to Essex Avenue, Swampscott, during 1924 to the house of Miss Myra Chapman, school teacher. In those days teachers were always ‘Miss.’ They had no suspicious relationships with men and went to the grave intact. (Another myth).

My mother had dressed me in clean clothes from head to foot and gone inside the house leaving me with strict instructions “not to get dirtied because I have to get ready for work.”

I got all muddy but decided I’d best make up a story. “I was kidnapped by two big boys, taken to the beach and thrown in the ocean.” The story must have been convincing. Undressed, washed, sent to bed. Sleeping, only to be awakened by a very large Swampscott policeman. I feigned sleep until he went away.

I cannot possibly vouch for having measles as a baby and being spirited away from Asbury Grove, a bible camp where my mother and Aunt Lillian worked during several summer months as waitresses. Yet I do recall being held against Seretha Halliday’s bosom and driving away from the camp. There are other ... slighter memories. Of my Aunt Lillian and me walking through a swamp-like area and

Lillian threatening to push me from the path into the quicksand.

At five, my 'real' life began. A life of which I have vivid memories. My first trip to Nova Scotia, Canada, my grandmother's birth place, happened when I was five. We drove in my Aunt Bessie Robert's Vinson motorcar. Bessie, her daughter Barbara Lewis, my grandmother, and myself. Barbara and I in the back seat of this older model Vinson which carried several tires on the rear end. In those days blowouts and flat tires were a common occurrence for motor travellers. Barbara and I snuggled down under a monstrous buffalo robe, our hands wandering about as we experimented with kissing. Barbara was an older woman, nearly ten years old to my five and willing years.

Another true memory at five when Bobby Judkins, Billy Thompson, Frankie Marsh and I, hiding in our clubhouse beneath the porch, pissed in an old funerary urn and equally divided the contents, swearing lifelong friendship. Another true memory of the time: undressing with a local neighbor girl and examining her as she examined us.

I spent considerable time at my grandparents' restaurant while my mother was off at work. Not far away was the Lynn Fire and Notification Company, one of those private organizations where heavy canvas and rubber blankets were placed over goods during a fire as required by their insurers. I walked to the fire hall, where the fireman on duty took me upstairs. He paid me ten cents to watch him masturbate, and I was to tell my grandparents I received the money for carrying wood into the firehouse. The fireman allowed me to slide down the shiny brass pole. Just like a real fire laddie. All innocent adventures of youth that included running away from home only to return before dark knowing that I would get a whack if I were late for supper.

At age six, and just before I was slated to attend grade one, I had my head split open because I would not share my bread, butter and sugar with the older boy living just over the fence on the next street. Because of the intimidation suffered by small children, I cannot be certain but that Aunt

Lillian, taking care of me, may have struck me and made up the story. She DID bring a basin of water and a rag to clean my wounds. I do not expect Lillian disliked me as much as she disliked a child interfering with her teen-age plans.

Life began to be more mine and less that of other, bigger persons. When I was seven we moved to Lynnfield, where my grandfather and a distant relative named Herbert E. from Beverly, Massachusetts, had in 1926 purchased a rather large commercial property on Pillings Pond. It was called 'Shoreside' and included a gas station, restaurant, soda fountain, general store, and boat livery. These were the days when opportunities seemed propitious for small businessmen. Common workers were investing in stocks and bonds, perhaps for the first time in American history. We were moving up in the world.

At that time Lynnfield was a small community only a mile or so up Walnut Street from the bus stop where one caught the bus to Lynn, ten miles away. Wonder of wonders, Gramps bought an automobile, the first that the family had ever had, a Ford. It was about the cheapest car at that time. My mother received her licence and we drove around the countryside as well as all the way to Lynn to visit with friends and relatives. Ten miles to Lynnfield was a considerable distance when in 1928 sixteen miles from home was about as far as many travelled during a lifetime.

I enjoyed Lynnfield. We had Pillings pond and, just down the street from the house where we lived, another pond, a small mill pond, dark and mysterious where reputedly many persons had disappeared, never to be seen again ... or so we were warned. Just across the street from our house, at the end of Pillings Pond, stood the vast and chilly ice-house. Through the winter local men would work out on the frozen lake, sawing great strips of ice, as much as fifty feet long, out of the lake, pushing them with long poles through an open canal to the ice-conveyor, where the ice would be sawn into blocks and carried up into the ice-house. There, men inside the building would pack the blocks in sawdust to await spring and summer when the ice would

be moved and sold to fill the ice chests of Lynnfield and Lynn.

Soon I began my studies in the small wooden schoolhouse at Lynnfield Center. A little weird, but I recall nothing about the school except that it was on a slight hill above a small brook where I picked water iris to take home to my mother. I also contracted pneumonia that quickly turned into an infection of the lungs. Lobar pneumonia was a far more serious matter in those distant times sans antibiotics. Within hours I had a raging temperature and was shipped off to the Melrose Children's Hospital where I languished in bed for three weeks with a tube in the pleura of my left lung that drained pus into a large, stinking container beneath the bed.

Ah, well, it was not ALL misery. I was in the children's ward and, since we could not move from bed to bed, we found solace and games by throwing dart-notes to each other. My grandmother brought us several ears of corn, which the staff boiled for us and we devoured. What to do with the cobs but throw them at each other, just as the head nurse entered and caught several cobs on her bosom. From the little girl in the next bed, I learned my first French word, "Merde," of value many times over the years.

After weeks of recuperation at home, I was once more thrust upon a waiting world and allowed to roam through the Lynnfield area around the ponds and fields. Although I learned to skate on my weak ankles and enjoyed the winter sports of the local people, I never really became a sportsman.

## 2

# Antecedents

My father, George Winthrop Morrill, born at Peabody, Massachusetts, was an orphan child. Beyond that fact, and that he was adopted or 'taken-in' by a Mr. Philpots, Sexton of the Washington Street Baptist Church of Lynn, Massachusetts, I know little except that his mother's name was Winthrop. My father was in either the US Army or US Navy during WW1 and worked at the General Electric Company as some sort of in-plant steam engineer. It was my grandmother's opinion that "George was a womanizer. Used to follow them Polish girls out into the fields behind the West Lynn Works for some kind of fooling around during lunch hour." In 1919 my mother, Alice Madelyn Weld, was twenty-three years old. There had been few young men around Lynn after 1916 (the US entered WW1 in 1917), and twenty-three was getting on to be an old maid for those times when girls were frequently married and had two or more children by the age of fifteen. Alice met George. Alice and George were married and Alice became pregnant. George left Lynn, and on July 4, 1920, the magnificence of Donald Herbert Morrill came into that 'best of all possible worlds.' (Note: Dr. Pangloss from *Candide* by Voltaire.)

[Although WW1 began in 1914, the United States did not enter until 1917. Many Americans continued to be suspicious of Britain's aims. Many transplanted Europeans had little reason to return to countries they had rejected.]

In 1932 when I was twelve, my mother was divorced from George and not long afterwards found that he had died

at the veterans' Hospital in San Luis Obisbo, California. Since he died intestate, I became his sole heir and inherited his \$400.00 soldier's bonus of WW1. As my mother was continuing to waitress at miserable wages, the cash came just in time to pay for my appendectomy and tuition at the nearby Ace Welding School on Pine Street just over the Lynn Saugus line.

George W. Morrill left little to me but my name and that of his mother, Winthrop. I have no more knowledge of him or of my paternal relatives. Winthrop, however, is quite prominent in New England history. Lot Morrill was the senator from Maine who wrote the Land-Grant Colleges Act in 1862. This act gave young men of rural areas an opportunity to attend college. Very unusual for the 19th century. The town of Morrill, Maine, is so small it does not appear on my Rand-McNally highways guide.

My mother's father was Herbert Horace Weld who was born on a farm in the area of West Lynn known as the Brickyard not far from J.B. Blood Market. Her mother was Alice Maude MacBurney Woodbury Weld. Because of my mother's work, my grandparents were very close to me. H.H.Weld was the only father I knew. 'Herbie' was an imposing man although very gentle. He had been an early member of the Knights of Labor and blacklisted for his socialist views in the shoe industry, where he had been a skilled member of the Lasters' Union. Sixty years later, his funeral was attended by the few surviving Italian apprentices he had trained in his youth.

At the time he was blacklisted he had a young family to support and could not remain long unemployed. His problem was that prior to WW1, there was no unemployment insurance or pension for workers. While it might have been possible to obtain a miserable amount of money from the city coffers or a charitable organization, few workers would allow themselves the loss of dignity required to crawl to the authorities for aid ... an attitude the authorities were quite willing to encourage since unemployment was believed to be the fault of the worker and not of the employer.

Even then it was considered to be God's punishment to be a worker rather than a boss ... to be a subject slave rather than a king.

Grandfather, with the help of friends, bought a small steam-cart on wheels and became a vender of hot-dogs along the beaches of Lynn. Eventually, Herbie and Maudie bought a small steel Goodridge Garage, which they turned into a workers' restaurant on a corner of the land occupied by the Narrow Gauge Railroad. Their profits could never have been very large since, although they had paying customers at the front door, they also had a stream of unemployed at the back door whom they fed for free. Both my grandparents were very much community oriented. They belonged to the Peter Woodland Lodge of the Knights of Pythias and assumed responsible positions in the Kiddie Kamp Korporation (unfortunate initials), an organization of Protestants, Jews and Catholics dedicated to sending the children of the poor away to camp during the summers.

Gramps' three-year effort to rise in the business world—'Shoreside'—collapsed in 1929 when the entire business went under. His 'friend' Herbert E. skipped town (we were told) with the little money left in their bank account, and Gramps was left holding the bag. In those days it was not unusual for small businesspersons to pay off their debts. Gramps obtained a job as janitor in the bank which had been gracious enough to accept his patronage earlier. As well as janitor, his duties often included taking over an absent teller's job on the main floor behind the wicket. Often he assisted older women depositors with their business until one day the president of the bank noted all the attention he was getting and insisted that he should wear a "proper uniform when upstairs." Nothing fazed Grandpa. He wore his new uniform proudly. At the age of eighty he was made Vault Clerk, an officer of the bank.

Grandpa Herbie's father was a shoemaker from Barrington, New Hampshire, who had a shop in Lynn just off Market Street in an alley adjacent to the Boston-Maine railroad bypass. Not until many years later did I learn he

was also related to the Weld family of Boston, Cambridge and Tokyo. Apparently the Welds spread money all over Boston and Cambridge: Weld Hall in the Peabody Museum at Harvard, as well as Weld Hall at the Salem Maritime Museum, and the Weld Boathouse and Weld Hall at Harvard University. What goes 'round, comes' round again somehow. Dr. Weld as well as Ernest Fenalosa, Dr. Bigelow, and Dr. Edward Moss were all instrumental in the founding of the Tokyo National Museum. I am still somewhat amazed that my life, when I was early set on a course as dishwasher for P.C.Hicks, Caterer, should become deeply involved in Japan as a potter and as husband of Isao Sanami-Morrill, also an artist potter. The present governor of Massachusetts (1996/7) is William Billy Weld, a distant relative. Herbie's mother was a Burnham from Essex, Massachusetts. Although the Burnhams and the Morrills were responsible for the establishment of Burnham & Morrill Baked Beans, the last Burnham of whom I have any knowledge was a clam-digger working along the Flats in the riverine areas of Essex, Massachusetts.

My grandmother, Alice Maude Weld, was born on a farm in Nova Scotia, either at Springhill or at Wallace Bridge. She came to the United States when she was eighteen years old to work as maid-of-all-work for a Lynn family who were in the plumbing trade. In the States these young men and women were extolled as "Good-God-fearing-no-nonsense-country-people" which presumably meant that they would work cheap and for long hours just to get away from the stultifying and poverty-stricken life of rural Nova Scotia, where they would remain on the farm, marry, give birth and die young. They were considered "members of the family." This was a sort of Christian/Imperialist concept which allowed persons of a lower rank to believe they were equals ... so long as they realized, as did their betters ... that they were not equal with their masters.

Grandmother Weld was of mixed Irish, Scotch, and Miquemaque ancestry, all tough, independent peoples. She

was unrelentingly honest and straightforward in her relations with others.

After some dispute with her masters, with whom she differed about equality, my grandmother, took her place at P.C.Hicks' as a baker, where she met my grandfather. After their marriage they opened the restaurant at the Narrow Gauge. I recall Grammy buying spinach at a local grocer's. Finding it half rotten when she arrived home, she immediately ran back to the clerk/owner. He refused to believe it rotten until she wiped his face with it and probably threatened to wipe up the floor with the man himself. Many years later she made her great foray into entrepreneurial life and opened a short-lived Clam Cakes and Corn Cakes stand at Salem Willows with her friend, Registered Nurse Mildred Smith.

A word or two about my grandparents and Miss Smith: During the 1920s and 30s Miss Smith was mistress of George Rausher, a local automobile dealer and friend of Alice Maude and Herbert Weld. His 'proper' wife was incurably ill and no divorce was possible. (They were not fooling around when the priests said, "till death do ye part.") My grandparents were extremely liberal in their views for the times. Perhaps my grandfather's labor history in the shoe factories of Lynn helped to join them in what was, for the times, an open relationship. My mother, because of her divorce, was inevitably bound for the pits of whoredom, at least in the opinion of religious fundamentalists.

Amazing how very little we know of our parents and even less of our grandparents. In some sense I expect I am fortunate to know even so little about parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents. Only when Alice Maud was on her deathbed did I learn she had won a pair of silver skates as a young girl, racing on the frozen Wallace River In Nova Scotia.

Grandmother Weld's mother, at least when I knew her, was a very small, birdlike woman (I believe her name was Woodberry) nearly 100 years old and fast on her feet. My grandmother commented that her mother could outrace her

to the outhouse or the well, which were both quite a distance from the farmhouse. She looked more MicMac than her daughter and, when first I saw her, she was running from the house to the well for water, smoking an old T.D.(?) clay pipe which she quickly placed in a pocket of her apron. As we stepped from Aunt Bessie Roberts Lewis's (of Nahant) Vinson touring car, Greatgrandma ran to us ... smoke pouring from her apron pocket. She flung off her apron and said, "Now I wonder how that got there?" Some years later we learned of her death at George Dwyer's farm at Wallace Bridge. She was quite active right up to the time she died and must have been more than 100 years old, 105 or 107. Few records were kept at that time of the birth of undeserving Scots of native heritage.

Her first husband and my grandmother's father was half MicMac and half Scottish. His people camped on the farm at Wallace Bridge during the summer and early fall ... helping with the crops and getting in the winters salt fish. His mother was a MicMac from the reserve at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.

When I was living with George Dwyer in the mid-nineteen thirties, our cousins from the Shubenacadie Reserve, down near Lantz, came to tent on George's farm. If I had to have ancestors, I could not have chosen better.

# 3

## Lynn Public Library

Life at Lynnfield was idyllic. Every day, however, we were getting closer to 1929. Although we are led to believe that 1929 was the 'trigger' of the Depression of the 1930s, the economy had begun its slide earlier. The great expectations of the post-WW1 period were reflected in frantic buying and selling on stock markets which had remained moribund in the production of consumer goods since late 1914. Most effort had revolved around the production of munitions and military spin-off.

Wages during WW1 had been relatively high, and war savings had encouraged a segment of the working class to join those persons with somewhat greater economic stability on the stock markets. This factor may have encouraged relatively large fortunes to be made by persons with little previous experience, but the riches were ephemeral and quickly dissipated by the toboggan slide of markets during 1928. The savings and small businesses of thousands of Americans were wiped out overnight, including Grandfather Weld's 'Shoreside' in South Lynnfield.

Once again we moved. This time back to Lynn to a three-tenement house on Hanover Street in West Lynn, the great descent into the land of the newcomers. I almost immediately came down with whooping cough and, to cap that vile illness, scarlet fever. When I had finally recovered, I went back to school, this time not far from home at the Cobbett

Elementary School just behind the Lynn Public Library, my true educational institution.

The Lynn Public Library became my real home and I was fascinated by every aspect. I would often visit there and look at books or stand in the great soaring rotunda, surrounded by books and stairs, leading to new explorations. Surely it must have seemed so to a child wide-eyed in paradise. "Quiet, please, when you are entering, leaving, or in the library. Many other persons are here, reading and studying." It must have been the 'other' which impressed me. To think that I was completely accepted as one reading and studying! Of course, as a small child my place was one small corner of the Youth Library known as the Kiddie Korner, presided over by a Miss Stromdahl. Tall, and severe, Miss Stromdahl was a good friend to us tads although we must have tried her patience often. Soon, and by special permission, I was able to achieve the honor of a library card 'upstairs' in the Young People's Room, where all of us immediately fell in love with the two Boisclaire sisters, the relatively young librarians, and Miss Louise O'Neil, somewhat older and wiser. On one full wall of this room were over one hundred sepia-toned and bronze photographs of soldiers of WW1 that had served in Lynn. In vain I looked for a photograph of the soldier who resembled me.

I had a great curiosity and must have begun to read very early ... probably just before I began to attend public school. In the Young People's Room an entirely new world opened before me. No longer Dick and Jane, Little Black Sambo, (!) or carefully sanitized stories about animals, constructed to protect the young and inquiring mind...a useless attempt, what with dogs, cats and horses fornicating on the streets of Lynn. "Ma, why do those women have their bathing suit tops down around their waist?" "They are dirty women and vaudevillians from the Capital Theatre." Perhaps this exchange between my mother and me was the beginning of a lifelong interest in the theatre.

Books there were by the hundreds. I recall reading the books of Sinclair Lewis, Mark Twain, Edgar Rice Burroughs,

Jack London. Many of the books available in 1928 I fear would no longer be available, in part because of natural attrition and in part because of the censorship imposed by Father Sherrill (or Shylock, as we later called him), chairman of the library committee.

My real aim was to obtain an adult card for use upstairs. I kept after Miss O'Neil for more than a year and after filling several cards in Young People's Room, I finally convinced her that upstairs in the Main Reading Room was where I truly belonged. She awarded me my adult card and I became privy to the thousands of adult books which I began to read, starting at 'A'. Amundson, Adams, Bok, Bellamy, Cabal, and on to Turgenev ... Just off the main room was a small alcove containing perhaps 200 books. Many quite old as well as new books both ancient and new. Sholem Asch, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Goethe in translation, ("und der knabe sprach" from *The Boy and the Rose*. Books in Yiddish, Greek, German, Dutch, Russian, and French. It made little difference to me that I could not understand the languages; I withdrew them from the library and carried them proudly home to keep them for two weeks, peruse them solemnly and return them to the main desk. It was not until at least three years later that I would study Latin under Miss Evelyn Leavitt at Cobbett Junior High and gain some slight knowledge of the construction of language. NO ONE ever questioned my choices. None of the ladies told me the books were "inappropriate."

Not surprising, I suppose, was the absence of both Chinese and Japanese and certainly no Urdu, Hindi, Telagu. None of the East Asian languages with which I would become familiar twenty years later. I cannot say that I learned any of those languages with fluency. Beyond a few words in all the tongues, I was illiterate. This lack did not dampen my ardor but kept me going in my voracious search for some sort of meaning to my life.

High upon the wall at the narrow end of the main reading room was a tremendous mural. Here I learned my first lessons in anthropology; the mural consisted of a highly

romanticized Neolithic family going about their daily lives that must have also included fighting a saber-toothed tiger. The family was all dressed in the skins of animals, even the baby. The mother was going about her wifely tasks and the father had just returned from the hunt. Fanciful, perhaps, in the light of later knowledge, but why would I question such a romantic view?

All those wide, strong, red-brown tables with their green shaded lights on either side. I discovered Leon Davidovich Bronstein (Leon Trotsky), Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Henry David Thoreau, Emerson, the Brontes, Gogol, *Dynamite* by Big Bill Haywood, *The Magic Bullet* by Paul de Kruif. Even Farrel Dobbs' book on the Minneapolis Teamsters' strike. And, wonder of wonders, the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States as well as the English and European revolts. Few of these books would have been more than barely touched upon had we been exposed to them in public school. I suspect that with the approbation of my grandmother, my future course was set. I became madly in love with books, libraries and incidentally, with one of the internee librarians, Phyllis W.

While many persons may applaud their public libraries, few are willing to admit to a truly 'loving' relationship, which has continued in complete loyalty for nearly seventy-five years. True, narrow on the rules of grammar ... an occasional misspelling but with a breadth as wide as the libraries of this world can provide. From Acton to Zemenhoff, with no apologies.

My interest in art, while it did not begin at the library, was certainly furthered by that enormous painting in the Main Reading Room. At an earlier time ... perhaps around 1927, my mother and I went to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, for a two-week vacation at a farm owned by a relative. Walking in the fields one morning, I met Ernest Calabro, a Boston artist, on a painting vacation from his Boston job in an art supply shop on Huntington Avenue. Calabro was not a Great Artist; perhaps he was an adequate painter. However, the ambience of the area and simply being

permitted to accompany an adult who was doing something more interesting than washing dishes as I would at ten, provided me with the proper 'trigger' for a future interest in art and in using my hands in a creative way. I was turned on to painting and art in general although I do not recall being greatly encouraged to pick up a brush. Later at the library I met Mario Paolini, an art historian of considerable talent and friend of my lifelong friend, Vincent Ferrini, the "Poet of Gloucester."

To write that I had no interest in sex at an earlier age might be quite true except that I was also curious about everything. At Barrington, one of the local girls somewhat older than myself provided me with an opportunity to increase my knowledge of physical matters. We walked in the woods and Rowena lay down under a tree and asked me to rub her stomach, since, so she said, "It's quite sore." Being a dutiful child, I complied, only to be told that it hurt much further down. "Yes, that is the place. Right down there between my legs." The manipulation did not at all impress me. I don't believe I even noticed any special vacancy, and soon Rowena was apparently disgusted with my amateurism, for she jumped to her feet and started for home. My interest in art went much deeper than my interest in sex ... at least for a few short years.

Public or private, it is the function of the school to mould youth into an image fitted for the society in which it will live. By and large the school appears to provide technicians for society, in some cases persons who will make small waves easily cancelled by the larger society ... to eliminate most passion, which cannot be easily directed. In my case this manipulation of the spirit has been only moderately successful. In this early spring I look out my window and see flights of birds skimming the air in apparent freedom and realize that their slavery is far greater than mine. The proof (if necessary) is not in my mere happiness but in my continuing exploration, my undiminished attempts to understand the world around me and its inhabitants. Truly I am a stranger here myself.

## 4

# My World Broadens

**1929.** Hanover Street in deepest West Lynn, but still a respectable neighborhood of Greek and Jewish composition. We soon moved from Hanover Street back into the more yankeefied areas of East Lynn to a small cottage behind the home of Dr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick.

Dr. Lovejoy, father of Mrs. Kirkpatrick, lived with them in the large yellow house fronting Broad Street. To the right of the doctor's house lived Miss Josephine Horgan, who had been my first grade teacher at the tin school between the administration building and Cobbett Elementary School on Franklin Street. (When Cobbett burned to the ground, we had been transferred to the old Leighton Street School which must have been built at the time of the Civil War, if not earlier.) After Miss Horgan's came the home of Rabbi Harburg, followed by the Women's Club House in Washington Square.

One morning after Christmas I sat on our front stoop reading one of the Tom Swift books I had received as presents.

“Do you enjoy reading, Boy?”

“Yes, sir. Very much.”

Looming above me was the very old figure of Dr. Lovejoy whom I had not seen previously. I had only heard of him as a ... “mysterious figure”.

Dr. Lovejoy questioned me about my reading and asked if I would like to use his library. (I thought he meant he owned the public library but it seemed he was speaking of

his own private library somewhere in the yellow house.) Soon I found out where.

After several days of conversation, the good doctor asked if I would like to read to him. We entered a small door in the wisteria that covered the front piazza of his home. The way led up a short set of stairs to a locked room which turned out to be the library and my introduction to medicine and general science.

Not long after that, when warmer weather had arrived, I heard Dr. Lovejoy through his open window speaking to himself in Latin and Greek, as well as English. That was the night he died or soon afterwards. I had lost my first mentor.

I attended the West Baltimore Street School, one of the old original wooden schools of Lynn. Miss Ferris, principal. At West Baltimore I quickly made and kept many friends for several years: Herbert Estes and Elmer Davis, who lived just across Broad Street next door to Charlotte Spinney; Roderick Young, Betty Donahue, and Rita Silk. For older persons these were not the most uplifting times. Herbert Estes' father, Patch Estes, lost his job as clerk when Raymond's Department store went bust. Betty Estes was shipped off to California to live with an aunt. Shops and larger stores were closing all over Lynn as well as the shoe factories and the General Electric Lamp Works. My grandmother had worked there when she first came to Lynn from Nova Scotia. For many years the upper stories of nearly all buildings on Market Street, from Broad Street to City Hall Square, were vacant, at least until World War 2. I recall only two that were used. One of these was a factory making baby shoes. Another rentable vacancy was Providence Hall which, several years later, we rented for lectures sponsored by the Socialist Party.

Those were very rough times for adults. For the most part, however, children were insulated by their youth and capacity for adventure: Friends' Meeting House, the 'Haunted House' the cemetery, and the candy store of the grandfather of Elmer Davis next door to the Hoey twins. Their father and mother operated the Chinese laundry. There

was little pressure to succeed. Success was indicated by one's good fortune in being able to continue school. Clean clothes, Yes! New clothes for the school year? No. There was never enough money to buy more than a new pair of sneakers and the most desired were KEDS made in East Boston by Congress Rubber. With a new pair of Keds one could out-speed the wind.

We thought little of walking wherever we wished: to Swampscott, where my great-great-grandfather ran a boat livery during the early 19th century. We walked to Salem, perhaps eight miles along Boston Street, just to visit the Salem Maritime Museum, or to walk a few miles farther to Salem Willows. Works Progress Administration (WPA) built a large tidal swimming pool near the Coast Guard Station in Salem but I do not recall ever swimming there. We were content to swim at Red Rock in Lynn or even to hitchhike all the way to Gloucester, when somewhat older, to swim in the quarries of Cape Anne.

Even then the trolley cars were running and cost only five or ten cents. It was said to be possible to get on a trolley car in Bangor, Maine, and by walking from the end of each city line to the beginning of the next, to alight from the last car in Miami, Florida. Somewhat of a stretch, I admit, but we had one of the world's best transportation systems. All of this grandeur died with WW2.

The following year I went to Brickett School. Miss Margaret Towle was my teacher. How fortunate I was to have a teacher with an understanding of what it was to be taller than anyone else in the class. Oddly, my closest friend was Irving Zack, one of the smallest kids in class.

The following year we moved to Rogers Avenue and I was permitted to ride my bicycle across the city in order to finish out my second year at Brickett School. Always a different route to take going to school and returning home. Rogers Avenue to Essex Street and turn right on Chestnut past the Fire Hall. Up to Lewis, turn right to school. Return home along the beach. All the way to Washington Street ... to Olympia Square and onto Essex and Rogers Avenue again.

Truly, Lynn was mine, every house, street and all the cobblestones of Central Square. How could the ownership of 'property' ever have meant anything to a child with an entire city and its environs in which to roam?

There was no part of the City of Lynn that was unfamiliar to me. From West Lynn, where Strawberry Brook came out of the street culvert, to where my grandfather was born in the 'Brickyard.' To Alice avenue, East Lynn, my mothers birthplace, and farther on to the Swampscott line where my great-great-grandfather Weld had his boat livery. All of this area, including the Great Wood (The Lynn Woods Reservation), was mine to travel through, to learn and to make my own. Perhaps one good reason why I felt there was never a need to have a property deed ... The entire city was mine.

How fortunate as well to have grandparents with no racial taboos. Grandfather Weld's closest friends were Newcomb Richmond, pharmacist; Abe Ames, policeman; and Wilson Thorne, teacher of mathematics. His community interests brought many contacts. Lynn was truly a place of marvels in which to grow in the knowledge and friendship of wide ethnic diversity. From Albanians, through Greeks and on to Lithuanians and even Yemenites. (!)

Black persons had lived in Lynn long before the American Revolution. Others had arrived from the south as escaped slaves and still others came down from Nova Scotia, earlier, when the British had freed the 'slaves in fact,' replacing them with Scottish bond-servants.

A large number of black persons had emigrated to Bridgetown, Nova Scotia: Miz Mitchell of Lynn was a very old lady when I met her and realized she was also the aunt or grandmother of Elizabeth Mitchell of Prospect Street, Lynn. Joseph Makkers, who bought a house in Bridgetown, was a dear friend of mine long after we were both General Electric employees.

Truly, few American children could have had the great good fortune to be born in Lynn.

# 5

## Cobbett Junior High

Probably an excellent example of the architecture of its period, Cobbett Junior High School was, as most schools seem to be to the young captives, a forbidding mass of red brick with beige columns. This was not the original school but the extension built in front of what had been Cobbett School, an entirely different building of wood which I believe was on an opposite corner and became the Lynn Shoe School. In my time, Cobbett Junior High also contained the Lynn Vocational School. It was considered somewhat shameful to attend this school. Probably one step lower in the opinion of us captives was the Lynn Shoe School. If one couldn't make it in the high school College Course, the only option was to drop out ... attend vocational or descend to Shoe. Of course, only boys were allowed to attend either of these schools ... girls who failed junior high simply became wage-slaves at the most menial tasks in the shoe shops or behind the counters of the Five and Dime stores where the acceptable daughters of the working class might capture a husband.

At that time I was beginning to become active. Barbara lived in the apartment house just over our back fence from our house on Rogers Avenue. I often met her on her back steps in the late evening after she was ready for bed. Sexually I could not have been ready or, more to the truth, I was so inhibited I could not make the proper approaches. Now I feel certain she would have been receptive. There was also a girl named Virginia in the same apartment house and with

whom I had the same frustrated relationship. My friend, Don MacKinnon, aged sixteen, took over Barbara, and I became acquainted with Alma, a girl who came to visit Barbara. Alma could easily have become the light of my life at the time. She was a lovely young woman from Revere Beach. I often biked ten miles to Revere to visit with Alma. Although I recall lying on a bed with her and kissing her, I never got beyond this stage. When she asked if I loved her (I am certain a prelude to further exploration), I replied that my intent was to become a scientist and I couldn't become involved in such meaningless relationships. (Idiot.) I simply did not know how to return love. What a waste! Several years later I learned that Alma had become a nun. I doubt I was responsible in any way.

Oddly, I spent a great deal of time with Alma, Barbara, and George Lauzon, as well as Bob Goodwin, teaching them about biology and, I expect, the birds and the bees. Two years earlier Bob and I played with a girl named Pauline. She sat between the two of us in the front row at Cobbett while Harvey, superintendent of schools, a most miserable political hack, gave one of his usual spit-showering speeches... slobbering pig-like, as he usually did and looked. So it also had to be that period when for five cents Pauline allowed me to examine her while we sat in the bushes up at the local quarry (Lynn Sand and Stone) where Manning Bowl was eventually built.

Everything then was experiment; reaching out to find new ways of living for myself.

Although she never knew it, I was madly in love with Lillian Goldberg. She lived at the end of a long walled lane on Washington Street just opposite the apartment house where Barbara and Virginia lived. Lillian was my version of the golden-haired princess of the storybooks. In fact she was none of those things. She was a skinny girl with yellow hair ... but we believed that her family was rich ... after all they appeared to own their own home, which was stucco and thus different from every other home on Washington

Street. It seems to me that her father owned Goldberg's Furniture Store on Monroe Street.

During the 1930s in Lynn, however, we were all pretty much in the same boat. We were deep in a depression brought about by greed and the growing concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Very little business was going on.

There was little work for anyone and, for the heads of most families, living was no longer as secure as it had been during WW1. Before midmorning the streets of Lynn were crowded with out-of-work shoe workers, tailors, lamp workers, and General Electric workers. The Lynn Public Library became a haven for a large number of unemployed workers. Within the rules of "No talking, loud noises, eating, or smoking," the library was a place of quiet elegance where one could read and dream away the unkept promises of America while keeping warm and dry.

Perhaps more importantly, prices did not rise appreciably between 1929 and 1946 in the US as a whole. Meat was still only about forty cents a pound for a decent steak. Bread was ten cents a loaf (five cents for day old). Until WW2, margarine was practically unheard of ... if spoken of at all, it was with revulsion as being a WW1 substitute: "We'd have to be poverty stricken to eat that crap." Milk was only ten cents or fifteen cents a quart, and the farmers were dumping milk in an attempt to increase the price they received from the distributors.

Wages were slashed continually, frequently more than once per day. In Lynn as in most cities of that time, many workers were paid their wage by the day and in cash. My grandfather, as an independent owner of a small working class restaurant, made about \$ 35.00/week and this included my grandmother's work in the restaurant as well as the labor of my Aunt Lillian.

My mother worked for P.C. Hicks, the caterer, as a waitress. Not only did P.C. Hicks operate from Lynn, he also ran a restaurant during the summer months at Old Orchard Beach in Maine where winter waitresses were also

expected to put in time and where my grandmother and Aunts Lillian and Eleanor also worked for a time. Often my mother travelled by truck distances of over 100 miles. When one considers that few persons prior to WW2 travelled more than sixteen miles from their birthplace in the United States, 100 miles was a very great distance. Waitressing was a menial, underpaid job where 'tips' received from uncaring, cigar-smoking men demanded a smiling face and a subservient attitude. She received \$2.00 for each job she worked on in Lynn and Essex County and \$3.00 for each banquet she waitressed out of the county, as well as what small tips she made which were shared with the other waitresses on the job. She might leave the house at 10:00 a.m., and work on two widely separated banquets, and receive a total of \$5.00 plus \$3.00 for tips. A grand total of \$8.00 for twelve to fourteen hours' work which brought her home at nearly midnight.

Her greatest personal foray into the outer world, however, was the trip she took with her sister Eleanor whose husband, Ross Gilmoure, was a G.I. stationed in Oklahoma at Fort Sills.

I began working for P.C. Hicks for ten cents an hour, soon graduating at ten years old from swilling a mélange of mashed potatoes, roast beef fat and soggy cigar butts to lugging heavy boxes of hernia-encouraging dishes and chests of scalding food up and down several flights of stairs in Masonic Lodge halls, Chamber of Commerce meeting rooms and Lions Club luncheon rooms. Hernias were endemic among the help. Frank H. was relieved of heavy duty when he became nearly unable to walk. It was considered unmanly to complain and I spent much time, in secret, crying over my fate.

One learned to view food as simply shit on the way to an asshole, and our patrons as so many pigs at the trough. Percy Hicks was probably no better and no worse than most bosses of the period. He was born in Nova Scotia and was related to several of the employees. This fact, I am sure, made him tread somewhat carefully. But his employees were very

loyal ... dependent and scared shitless of losing their jobs. I rarely heard anyone bad-mouth the boss.

An employee, Archie was a small Scotsman with filthy habits. Banana fritters are made by cutting bananas in short pieces and dipping them in a batter preparatory to frying them. More than once Archie while coating fritters would drop his quid of chewing tobacco into the batter. He simply fished around until he found his chew, wiped it on his dirty apron and popped it back in his mouth ... and continued his mindless occupation. Archie was small. Archie's wife was small. Their daughter was small. They lived in a very small house.

The boss was big. P. C. Hicks was big all over. Fat face atop a bulging belly. All held up by two fat, waddling feet. Holier than thou ... a vestryman in the Washington Street Baptist Church, where we were all expected to attend Sunday services as well as Sunday school and Wednesday prayer meetings. It was not all nonsense. At the church I heard Igor Theremin play the Theremin ... the first of the electronic marvels for making music. The Theremin consisted of an arrangement of two oscillators; one was a vertical rod and the other a flat plate. Professor Theremin would move his hands over the device and change the tone and timbre. Nearly every horror picture made until WW2 or later used the Theremin for weird effects.

Clayton was the head cook at P. C. Hicks, the caterer. Clayton was big and white and muscular. He looked as if he had been dipped in the flour where he spent much of his time. In a discussion one day Clayton remarked that he had never seen his wife's naked body. She dressed and undressed in the closet (it was a very large closet). "What about in bed, Clayton?" "She always wears big nightgowns." "Yeah, but ... yeah, but ..." "Never got above her hips and always under the covers." To this day I can't recall why the discussion started.

Frank and Seretha would never admit to being virtual sets of the boss. They were putting in very long hours at reasonable pay for the times but, in addition to their work

at the West Lynn kitchens, they cleaned the boss's house, washed his car, babysat his children, and took care of his summer home. Seretha was the boss's secretary although I think it went much beyond that. Seretha and my mother were the closest of friends, and I recall my mother's being uneasy about Seretha's relationship with the boss.

There were others in the kitchen: Hjalmar (Elmer). Why is it that so many food workers turn out to be fat and white? Even black kitchen workers! Morrie Montour, however, was tiny and born to be kicked around. He was the official dishwasher. His hands were white and parboiled.

This first job, among all subsequent reasons I gave myself, was undoubtedly the reason I threw in my lot with the first passing radical, who happened to be Ernie Zief, a former school chum persuaded by his brother Bonnie to become a member of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL). Oh, fortunate day. Had it not been for that meeting I might have ended my days as a fourteen year old dishwasher becoming eighty had I survived that long!

When I bumped into Ernie on Union Street in Lynn after school that afternoon, I was surprised to see him selling newspapers. I had never thought that the Ziefs were that poor. The mystery was soon cleared up when Ernie gave me a copy of the *Socialist Appeal*. Although I had not heard of the paper, I eagerly accepted it. Ernie and I talked at some length, and he invited me to attend a YPSL meeting that evening on the second floor of the Grand Army of the Republic building in Central Square, Lynn. Surely that meeting changed my life for good. I was no longer alone in my rebellion but now could meet with my peers in some worthwhile endeavor.

We were young but not unconscious of what was going on around us. Although I knew of few families going really hungry, I knew many teetering on the edge of hunger. Where buying a six or seven pounds of pork rib only a few months ago had been the norm, at present ten cent hamburger with boiled potatoes and boiled cabbage became the Sunday dinner which once had been considered lunch for the

immigrant population. If we smoked, and most of us did, we picked butts off the street while looking for bottles and metals to cash at the junkman's yard (Mr. Jaffee(?) or directly to his helper as he walked his horse and wagon along the streets crying, "Old rags, bottles, cash for old rags, bottles and a really good price for lead and copper." We called him 'Mr. Springer,' perhaps for his habit of springing from his wagon, his eyes fixed upon a choice piece of junk before one of us kids could grab it and sell it to him.

Every season gave him a new name: 'Mr. Berries' or 'Mr. Cucumber' or 'Mr. Melon.' In fact, his name was Mr. Singer, a poor Jew working his ass off, sitting on his old wagon, trying to make enough money to feed himself, his horse and his large family destined for success in the metals business. Springer, Singer, either name was fitting for, somewhere within the depths of our animal hearts, we loved him. When his day's work was done, he often came to the playground and shared with us unsold cucumbers, berries or melons—overripe and bruised, but who worried?

It somewhat amazes me that I never became an anti-Semite. Certainly I was surrounded by a culture in which anti-Semitism played a quiet but deep role although I cannot recall any particular discussion among my school chums. With the exception of a few anti-Semitic incidents at Fisherman's Beach in Swampscott, where we later moved, ('Jews Out' on the walls and similar literature on the walls of Beth Israel in Lynn), I recall mainly the undying religious hatred between certain of the more unsavory elements of BOTH Protestants and Catholics. Perhaps in that golden time of the Great Depression we were simply one in adversity.

# 6

## Early Lynn

To give a feeling of the social environment in Lynn, I should like to describe further what I recall. Persons of this year, 2002, cannot grasp the enormous changes that have taken place during and after WW2. In North America these changes have been so devastating to human values one cannot help but be appalled, amazed, and disgusted. Some changes have been of value ... the air in Central Square, Lynn, is no longer redolent with the smell of horse manure. No longer do feces float about carrying viruses.

Perhaps the changes in women's position in society have been most earth-shaking. My grandmother, a very liberal woman, did not get her hair 'bobbed' until 1925. Then grandfather refused to speak to her for more than a week ... perhaps because he was not consulted. Women are now expected to enter the work force as a normal state of affairs whereas in the past women may have been called upon only to fill the gaps in factories lacking man-power that had gone into the slaughterhouse of war. Whether this is good or bad is another question ... it can be taken up at another time as a companionship for misery.

Although the telegraph had been around for nearly 100 years, the telephone was still not found in every home, and we didn't own a radio until I was going to West Baltimore Street School in 1928. The Model 'A' Ford made its appearance in our family in 1928 as well. Milk and bread continued to be delivered every morning by wagon, except

in winter when everything deliverable found its way to our house by horse and pung, a huge sled sometimes pulled by a pair of horses.

Even in a city such as Lynn, a city of nearly 100,000 persons, many houses lacked electricity and most were heated by wood or coal. The house on Broad Street that we occupied for a time ran the gamut of utilities from wood to coal and finally kerosene for heating. Coal gas was used for lighting as well as electricity. Wiring was all on the outside of walls and the current, although a nominal 115 volts at 60 amperes, was often closer to 90 volts.

Tuberculosis, although considered a 'shameful' disease of the poor, the crowded and the dirty, was quite common and, after the decimating influenza epidemic of 1917, measles, chicken-pox, scarlet fever, and mumps required the afflicted houses to post red, green or blue signs indicating the disease within, and children were kept from school with 'quinsy' sore throats. Syphilis and gonorrhea were unmentionable. Grandmother and her friend Kitty Berryman were discussing George Rausher's hernia and dropped the subject immediately upon my entering the room. Masturbation would drive one insane, and local idiots were often pointed to as examples of unrestrained private lust. Any female of any state did not, of course, masturbate. Presumably even the lowliest whore kept her body for men's purposes only.

Of course, here we are writing only of the middle-class ladies and their 'bettters.' Working-class women, although lip-service was paid to the gentler behavior, worked much too hard to be bothered, even though the mores expected of them resulted in terrible frustration. It had been only a few short years since Massachusetts and a few other northern states had passed legislation forbidding the employment of children under twelve years old from working in the cotton mills of Lawrence and Lowell. To my knowledge Massachusetts' law until fairly recently allowed girls of fourteen to marry with the consent of parents and the courts, and, presumably, if they were pregnant. I doubt the children

were consulted in the matter. In the North the exploitation of children was a well-kept secret. In the South one could still see toddlers picking slate from coal and picking cotton in the fields, a great bag fastened to their waist becoming heavier as they moved down the rows. I have no doubt that children also picked tobacco...not only in the South but also in the Connecticut Valley.

In many ways, although it resulted in difficulties for adults, the depression of the 1930s was a blessing for the young. There were so few jobs about that children had a chance to play for several years prior to WW2. At least this was true in the North although, on my few hitch-hiking trips South, small children could still be seen in the fields often dressed in re-conditioned flour sacks and barefoot. Education in the North and in the South was not seen as necessary for most working-class children and certainly not for working-class females. Of the four younger persons in my family, only my Aunt Eleanor completed high school and she went on to nursing school. Men and boys generally viewed with contempt college boys, tennis players, over-educated snobs, rich kids .... Beneath the contempt was the feeling that one's parents had failed, since they could not afford education for their children and instead urged them to "Go out and get a job. Make something of yourself." These statements probably insinuated that children should make a lot of money and become less of a burden on parents. Many families had an old auntie, spinster or widow used as a maid-of-all-work, and grateful for the position.

In the past ... certainly prior to WW1, farming had always been held up as a most desirable life, not simply farming but breaking new ground. Going West. Learning the multitude of trades necessary to farm new land. Although large tracts of land had always been held by a few persons of wealth and therefore status, by 1930 farming had become a business like any other business, and land was falling into the hands of business men with the capital to exploit land using the farmers and taking advantage of power-farming with the new tools available. The gas-engine made a

revolution in agriculture because of its ability to carry large amounts of its own fuel. It did not require hay and liniment during the off-season but could lie up in the barn with a minimum of attention. The gasoline engine became increasingly common and increasingly powerful, a reduction of weight, an increase in efficiency, and the ability to be turned out in massive quantities, making everyone increasingly dependent upon the machine and decreasing the necessity for a high degree of skill both in manufacture and maintenance. Although thousands of workers left the land between 1929 and 1938, thousands more remained to eke out a bare existence until WW2 when the price of all commodities skyrocketed. Once more the farmer was king, but the farm workers became the semi-skilled workers in the factories. This development and my reactions to it would send me along a path of social activism in my early teens.

# 7

## **Hadley Junior High, Swampscott, 1933-35**

Changing schools was always eventful for me; and changing to Hadley Junior High in Swampscott from Cobbett Junior High in Lynn was a momentous occasion which also included my mother's marriage to Nathan Dill. Nate had had a long career as a postal clerk in the Lynn Post Office, which eventually culminated in his transfer to Swampscott where he became Postmaster during and after WW2. Both Nathan and my mother had previously been married. I expect that a divorced woman in those times had a better chance of marrying a divorced man than she did marrying someone who had never married. He would be 'pure' no matter his sexual past, and she would be used goods regardless of who in her marriage had actually been at fault. Such a marriage between divorced persons was looked upon as some sort of re-arrangement of priorities in the glorious state of holy matrimony.

Nate was a very small man with the sort of thin, sharp nose I immediately mistrusted. He wore gold-rimmed glasses and was a fussy dresser, greatly concerned about his personal neatness and the neatness of objects around him. At the age of fourteen, I was not noted for these fine traits. Probably I have not changed appreciably. Nate Dill had two daughters by his previous marriage: Verna and Myrna ... or Irma. (Sounds like a third-rate vaudeville act playing through the villages of the mid-West.) The younger of the two daughters was taken by my manly beauty and attempted to seduce me in the back seat of Nate's Hudson

Terraplane automobile. Had we more room ... had I shorter legs ... had the opportunity been greater. Had I been less shocked she might well have succeeded. Alas, my virginity remained unassailed beyond the groping stage. I was saddened by my lost opportunity. It may be that this young woman merely meant to upset her father Nate, as he sat in the front seat driving. I doubt I saw either of these girls more than four times during the succeeding three years.

In Swampscott I quit high school. More like, Hadley Junior High School quit me. After one final altercation with Miss Alice Shaw, principal, she expelled me for wearing my sweater outside my suspenders and violating an unwritten dress code. Such things were BIG in those days, since the definition of a gentleman came right out of Victorian England and straight to New England. My expulsion did not disturb me greatly. I grabbed a few books and proceeded through the nearby woods to a shack we kids had by the side of a small creek behind Tedesco Golf Club. Concentrating on a book about biology, I did not hear footfalls approaching until looking 'way up, I saw Frank Mansur, superintendent of Swampscott schools, reading over my shoulder. We had met a few times previously although not under quite such pleasant circumstances.

Although I was often considered a brilliant student, I refused to toe the mark and get my homework in or complete various notebooks for science, which was a new subject at Hadley Jr. High. (My interest in science began when I was less than seven years old.) Or perhaps Mr. Mansur's concern was with my graffiti on the walls of the boys' toilet and on the walls outside the school: "Organize, we have nothing to lose but our chains. Down with the dress code. More books in the library." Hadley Junior High School in Swampscott was hardly an inner city school. Following my mother's second marriage we had moved up slightly in the world and Hadley was definitely middle-class. Frank Mansur was not entirely wrong in urging me to leave school at fifteen;

"Donald, you do not appear to be happy at Hadley and you are nearly fifteen, the age when you may legally quit

school if you wish. It might be best for all concerned if you quit now, two months before summer vacation and three months before your birthday, on the 4th of July, which may have some significance given your attitude."

This was OK with me and I quit forthwith. Never could the authorities believe that I would buckle down enough (or have enough money) to attend university. Of course they were right ... I had more important things on my mind; such as, building a second American Revolution.

Imagine, fourteen years old, going on fifteen and about to be let loose in an entirely new world, not once but twice within two short years. First I had been barely fourteen when my friend Ernie Zieff introduced me to a world of young persons in the Young People's Socialist League where even older persons gave us respect. Secondly, by the time I was fifteen, I had hitchhiked as far south as Washington, D.C., and as far north as Gorham, New Hampshire. I had worked for a part of the summer at the Ogunquit Playhouse in Maine (Director Walter Hartwig) and become deeply involved in the labor movement of the burgeoning Congress of Industrial Organizations through my association with the North Shore Industrial Council.

By an odd coincidence Evelyn Leavit, my former Latin teacher at Cobbett Jr. High and living in Swampscott, made contact with my mother and suggested I attend testing sessions at the Judge Baker Child Guidance Center, Boston. I was to be "tested for anti-social tendencies as well as intellectual levels." This was popular stuff in 1934. The testing of children, (art becomes artifact), hasn't changed much in sixty-five years since the psychologists captured us during WW2 only to turn us over to the marketing experts post-WW2.

The Judge Baker Center in Boston was at the Commons end of Pinckney Street on Beacon Hill. A medium-sized redbrick building with large windows and lots of psychologists. My personal psychiatrist was Dr. Malcolm S. Findley. Pleasant enough. I became highly involved in enjoying the wide range of tests, both intellectual and

mechanical, at all of which I appeared to have done well. The fact that I was singled out to take these tests as well as hold long conversations with Dr. F. was gratifying in itself. (I had always believed there was more to me than met the eye at first glance.) From the foregoing I appear to have been very outgoing and master of myself. Don't be fooled. Inside I was still the little boy shaking with fear of authority, as well as a fourteen year old dishwasher.

Boston, Massachusetts, the home of the Cabots and cod, "where Cabots speak only to Lodges and Lodges speak only to God." Despite all of that, Boston in 1935 was heaven for me with my chocolate bar lunch. I would spend my time listening to E. Powers Briggs playing the organ at King's Chapel, the soaring tones of the organ flowing around all of the curves of the ceiling and walls, coming back to my ears and flowing outwards again never entirely lost to my memory. At that time I had not discovered Cambridge and Harvard College, or Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). However, I had discovered the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Natural History, and the Boston Public Library as well as Symphony Hall, where for fifty cents I could enter and listen to the rehearsals on any Saturday morning. (Add to this, the ferry voyage across Boston Harbor and I was in paradise.)

I'm quite sure Nate and my mother must have thought I had some sort of truancy problem. Some mental aberration. Else why would I need to see a shrink at a place called The Judge Baker Child Guidance Center? The truth is that Boston and the center opened up a cultural life beyond my wildest dreams. I was under no illusion that a poor boy could aspire to become conductor of the Boston Symphony or actually enter university life or become another Arthur Fiedler, conductor of Boston Pops Orchestra. Instead I did take advantage of all Boston had to offer me from Roxbury to the North End.

Paul Revere's home is not far from the market and Hanover Street runs through the North End to Atlantic Avenue. The Street of the Sun King is not far away. I think

this is the loveliest street name in New England and even beats Seldom Good Pasture Road in Lynn.

Through the market again, past the Old Union Oyster House, up Corn Hill to visit for a short time at the Radio Shack, to Tremont Street, the burial ground where Ben Franklin is interred. Across the street to visit David P. Ehrlich's pipe and tobacco shop. By this time I was beginning to enjoy a pipe rather than cigarettes to which I had become addicted before I was thirteen years old. Ehrlich's had a fabulous collection of Meerschaum pipes and carved chess sets, now that I think of it. Ehrlich's was on Corn Hill or Milk Street behind the Boston State House at the time I was wandering around Boston. (David P. Ehrlich did not move to Tremont Street until later.)

It was usually 11:00 a.m. when I reached Boston Commons and time for lunch and two good hours of wandering and listening to all sorts of argument. The Commons was a marvelous place. Discussions, arguments, religious harangues. The Spanish Civil War had begun, and both the Left and the Right carried on great discussions politically. There were always anarchists as well as socialists, communists, fascists, and the usual republicans (both Irish and New England) and democrats, winter or summer. No matter, there was always something going on. After WW2, I visited the Boston Commons, and not until the Hippy movement and the anti-Vietnam demonstrations did anything much occur with the exception of the harangues of Father Neely, the fundamentalist Catholic priest and his bunch of fanatics. (Strangely, Roman Catholicism avoids the use of the term 'fundamentalists'.)

My regular appointment with Dr. Findley at Judge Baker was at one o'clock. It only lasted an hour or so and then I had the entire afternoon ahead of me. Straight up Beacon Street and angle over to Huntington Avenue past the Old Boston Opera House and Symphony Hall to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for an afternoon of glutting myself on paintings and artifacts of history. It seems to me that lack of a formal education may bring with it a broadening of both

knowledge and learning. Formal education implies a narrowing ... focusing ... of interest rather than a widening of scope. I became a wanderer among disciplines. A true hobo in the Sanskrit implication.

Boston always held a fascination for me although my explorations were not as broad as they might have been. Not until many years later would I begin to reconnoitre the South End or Roxbury or the many suburbs. I doubt I ever learned all of the Newtons ... or had any real need to. Newton, Newton Upper Falls, Newton Lower Falls, Newton Center, East and West Newton.

## 8

# Summers on my Own

It must have been the summer of 1935 around July 4th my fifteenth birthday. I caught a ride to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with Grandfather Herbert Horace Weld, Newcomb Richmond, and Abe Ames, all of us in Abe Ames's Franklin motor car. High off the ground, with glass windows, four doors. Crystal flower vases on the window posts and assistance straps all around. An air-cooled engine and a strange-looking sloping hood not unlike a Parisian taxicab. Its wheels were of wood as was the lovely dashboard. Windshield wipers were hand-operated by means of a crank handle inside the vehicle.

Abraham Ames was a very large man in all directions. He once swam from Lynn Beach to Egg Rock and back, a distance of more than four miles. Oddly, despite my youthful mistrust of policemen in general, Abe was simply another part of my landscape. I expect I never perceived him as a threat. Newcomb Richmond was a local pharmacist with a store on Eastern Avenue. I liked Newcomb. He was friendly, and I suppose I admired his success as a druggist. Life for a Jewish druggist could not always have been easy during the depression years. Yet there was little overt anti-Semitism in Lynn except among a few Jew-baiters, almost a tradition with some people, and without the virulent hatred we experienced later.

By 1931 Grandfather had lost his restaurant in South Lynnfield at Pillings Pond and had taken the job of janitor of the Lynn Manufacturers' Bank (later the Manufacturers'

Central Bank of Lynn). I believe it was 1933 when grandfather smashed his foot taking down the flag, as one of his daily janitorial duties. This accident caused considerable excitement and was reported in the *Lynn Daily Evening Item*. So the year may have been prior to '35 ... perhaps as early as 1933. I began going off on my own as early as 1932.

Aside from a journey to Philadelphia with Gordon Coan the previous year, this trip along the New Hampshire coast with my grandfather and his friends became my second exploration of the wider world. Of course, New Hampshire was no stranger to me. I had spent several summer vacations there with my family as a very young child. I bid Gramps and company adieu at the big traffic circle in Portsmouth. They continued on straight ahead for coastal Maine for their fishing trip, and I began the long trek up into the White Mountains.

In those days there was little traffic on route #1 and long waits for the casual hitch-hiker. Solitude was no real problem for me. Everything was new and fresh. I revelled in the grass, the trees, and even the cows by the highway. By great good luck (which usually seemed to follow me) I got a ride with a family from Johannesburg, South Africa. The father was a mining engineer. He, his wife, and young son, were on extended holiday crossing the United States to the west coast of Canada. It did not seem at all strange to them to consider Canada and the U.S. as two aspects of one large country. How could I find it strange? I probably had as many relatives from Nova Scotia and the Gaspé from the States. When we stopped at a refreshment stand, the family invited me to have a drink with them and in repayment I bought their young son a small jackknife. It was not at all unusual for children to carry a knife in that distant time. A very handy tool for a myriad of uses.

Somewhere on the long highway ... I believe it was Conway, New Hampshire, I was set down and continued on in my own time, getting to Gorham shortly. This was as far as I had intended to travel north. Turning about after

exploring Gorham, I made my way back along the road to Cowboy Brook where I camped for the night. Next morning found me on my way to one of the Appalachian Mountain Club campsites where I remained for another day. There I met a young man and three girls from southern Connecticut. They were all older than I but we seemed to get on well. Great good luck. The camp guard, a young person not much older than ourselves, was going home for several days and asked if we would like to take over his camp. How could we refuse a large tent with wooden floor, a fully stocked ice chest, two beds, and a food truck that would deliver fresh eggs every morning. Somehow, throughout my life I seem to have fallen from adversity and despair to good fortune.

For a few days we enjoyed ourselves at Wild Horse Campground. The young ladies left to go further north. The young man with whom I bunked left for home and Massachusetts. The camp guard returned. I packed my small amount of gear and went to North Conway and the beginning of the Kankamaugus Highway. In those days it hardly smoothed into a proper road and was in fact not much more than a gravel trail. It followed the original, narrow, dirt trail used by aborigines and later by horse-back riders and wagons, as homesteaders and traders moved westward on their quest for greener pastures far from the crowded eastern shores.

The Kankamaugus was beautiful and (to my small city eyes) wild ... as wild as the beginning of the wild west of Will James, Zane Grey or Jack London. I was not to travel into the true West until 1944 in an army troop car, and then the mark of commerce had settled much of the west coast as well as middle-America.

# 9

## Working for Cash

I do not know if my mother and Nate were happy and satisfied with their marriage. We moved from Walker Road to Franklin Avenue. They separated several times. I know I did not make life easier for either of them. There is somewhat of a blank in my memory, probably because I spent very little time at home. I know they fought and I know that I hit Nate across the nose with a slipper and gave him a bloody nose. I had heard them fighting from upstairs in my room and burst in upon them as he cruelly twisted my mother's arm .... Or perhaps he didn't. At this point they separated for the second time, and my mother and I moved back to Lynn to Fortesque Terrace opposite the Commons. At the Terrace we had one bedroom, a living room and small kitchen. I slept on a couch.

There was little work around Lynn. P.C. Hicks, caterer, was somewhat slow, and the only waitresses working were those with the longest seniority or closest attachment to the Boss. These included my mother who certainly needed the miserable pay. I had a great deal of time on my hands. Through the winter of 1936 I took some night school classes. I managed to obtain a small job at Lynn Stationery on Monroe Street and held on to it for over a month. One morning Percy Shulkin, the owner, walked in, threw his coat down on a display I had just finished setting up and shouted: "Hang up my coat." No "please," no "thank you" ... no nothin'. Being a red-blooded American boy, I figured I had

all I could take and walked out, never again to return to the retail trade.

At the time I was growing older and becoming more involved in socialist politics, I was also looking for a job. Working at Hicks the caterer part-time, I saw in the local newspaper an advertisement for a job as dishwasher and second cook and applied ... and got the job.

It was a small nightclub called the Blue Moon on Route #1 in Lynnfield. A nightclub with not the best of reputations. I was given a room on the second floor and informed that my day off would be Monday and that I would be paid \$20.00 a week and meals. I would also work ten to twelve hours per day. I lasted one month.

The official head dishwasher was an old drunk named Billy. Three or four times during the evening he would collect all of the glasses returned from the bar, pour the contents into a big mixing glass, and drink it down. Soon I became chief dishwasher when Billy got carried out on a stretcher, never to be seen again. The cook and second cook were Walter Burke and his wife, Madge. Walter was an interesting character. He had a very broad background. From being a member of the first Aero Squadron in WW1 and based in San Diego, Walter found himself in Hollywood and worked with such stars as Chaplin and Al Jolson in some of the worst films ever made. Madge was a small, compact woman determined that I wouldn't become a drunk and further determined that I would be fattened up by the time I quit the job to go on "to a better thing."

Upon apprenticing as a dishwasher, one affects a certain delicacy in swilling plates ... perhaps using a large spoon to clean them of half-chewed food, cigar and cigarette butts soaked in stale coffee or the booze surreptitiously brought in to the dining-room. After the dishes were swilled, they were plunged directly into water by no means hot enough to clean them and not too hot for the white and water-wrinkled hands of the dishwasher. The lack of hot water was taken care of by using plenty of strong washing powder. After the dishes were swabbed, they were plunged into the

second sink for the half-rinsing and then allowed to dry before being repacked into the boxes from which they had been taken. If the boxes were cleaned, it was only to scrape out the visible food and perhaps give a wipe. There always appeared to be great mountains of dishes. I as apprentice had the job of scraping and washing the roasting pans with their burned-on cargo of skin and turkey dressing.

My first Monday off passed uneventfully. I returned home with \$5.00 in my pocket. Jobs were so scarce I was treated as a returning tycoon by all of my friends around Central Square, Lynn.

The second Monday I was no longer a hero in my own home town. Such are the jaundiced eyes of youth. I must have had a beer or two before returning to the Blue Moon. As I ascended the stairs to my room, I could hear giggling and thrashing about. My bedroom door was closed but not locked as I had left it. I burst into the room to surprise a half-naked man and a fully naked waitress in the throes of 'paid-for-love.' They sprang from the bed, grabbed clothing and ran from the room. The man was very angry and, I'm sure, would have beaten me up if it had not been for the woman dragging him off me. Prior to our surprise meeting, I recall talking with the bartender and being curious as to why the waitresses lined their stockings with five dollar bills. The bar-keep had smirked and winked and said, "The money was tips." At the time I could think of no service important enough for the girls to receive \$5.00 tips ... all they did was tote drinks to the customers and I had to work damned near a week for the same money. Although I quickly learned the reason that night as I burst into my room, I was no less shocked and threw my mattress out the window! Stomping downstairs to the kitchen, I announced, "No one is going to use my room for a whore-house. I quit." As I made the long hike back to Lynn at 2:00 a.m., I had a chance to think about the events.

Phyllis Lord was the owner of the Blue Moon. She was an enormous woman and reminded me, for some strange and totally unrelated reason, of a character in Eugene Sue's

*Sewers of Paris.* I am uncertain that Eugene Sue actually wrote a book by that name! Phyllis had deep purple circles beneath her eyes and affected dresses dripping with jet. I do not at all recall her voice but I do recall her cooking. She was a magnificent cook and fed us royally every night after the club closed at 1:00 a.m. In the back woodshed she kept several whole sides of beef, each left hanging for several weeks until they were covered with a fine mold. She would then cut, personally, thick steaks, bring them into the kitchen and broil them for us along with mushrooms, onions and vegetables. Phyllis had a son, Jerry Lord. Jerry played trumpet and was what can only be described as dissolute. Jerry had the same baggy eyes as his mother. They appeared more like twins than mother and child. This was not my first meeting with the Lords. They had had a summer cottage on Pillings Pond in Lynnfield when my grandparents owned the property there called Shoreside. I do not recall that there was a Mr. Lord, but Jerry had several 'uncles' to make up for the lack of a father on the premises.

On my third night at the Blue Moon, one of the younger waitresses must have taken a fancy to me. After the place closed, she placed a finger on her lips and motioned me to follow her upstairs. Although I had no idea what she wanted, I willingly followed her. Stopping in front of the door to Phyllis's room, the girl quietly pulled a chair in front it door and directed me to look over the transom. There was Phyllis and the head of one of the billboard advertising companies fucking like crazy and looking like two elephants in rut. Their combined weight must have been well over 460 pounds. Everything in the room rocked as though the inn were afloat on the ocean.

After I left the Blue Moon, I went back working part-time for P.C. Hicks as a second cook and general lumper. A dirty scummy job. I do not believe there is any filthier job than working with food. It is not that food is dirty but that continual exposure to great masses of food turns it into shit before it is eaten. The smell of food ... of grease ... soaks into one's skin as surely as coal dust into the skin of a miner. No

amount of washing will remove it. Food workers always have the miasma of food following them. If not that, then the smell of talcum and after-shave lotion or toilet water is the telltale mask.

# 10

## Young Activist

I joined the Socialist Party in 1934 at fourteen via the Young Socialist League in Lynn. The Socialist Party (SP), Norman Thomas, president, and Alfred Baker Lewis, treasurer, must have had nearly forty members in Lynn and was large enough to actually have a youth section, the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), which probably had more members than the older group. Within the SP/YPSL was a third group consisting of former members of the Communist Party (CP) expelled because of their opposition to Stalin in Russia and opposed to Stalinist tactics within the United States. This very small group constituted the opposition and supported Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian revolution of 1917 who had been expelled from the USSR by Stalin along with a great number of members of the revolutionary period who were also in opposition to Stalin.

The principal disagreement between Trotsky and Stalin arose over Stalin's position that the revolution must be consolidated in Russia before being allowed to spread to other countries. Prior to Hitler and WW2, this position brought about many of the incredible excesses in Russia ... (Stalin executed twenty-five million Russians) despite the tremendous success of the Russian people in making Communism work. The view of Leon Trotsky and others, on the other hand, was that the revolution in Russia must be considered only a part of the world revolution, which was felt to be on the brink.

For the first time I was associated with persons my own age interested in world events, as well as with persons older ... many, much older ... who had actually been involved in the Russian Revolution of 1917, and many who were now involved in the Spanish Civil War which had begun in 1936. Both Alfred Baker Lewis and Norman Thomas came from old New England families, as did also such members as Walter Birch, John Hall, I myself, and certainly John Brooks Wheelwright, the Boston poet. There were many Italians ... Sally and Dawn Amero, both lovely young women whose father was a member of the Aurora Club of Boston, and a longshoreman.

Of course, we partied, picnicked and studied Karl Marx, Freidrich Engels, and James Morgan. At the Lynn Branch I was introduced to the works of Leon Trotsky (Leon Davidovich Bronstein), not only a giant of the Russian Revolution upon which we placed great emphasis but also an actual contemporary ... a living giant within history, actually LIVING history as were we, rather than simply being wholly within the context of the past.

Being young and enthusiastic, I had little regard for the slow and plodding methods of the Socialist Party and Norman Thomas. They placed little emphasis on the importance of organizing ALL workers. Therefore, I was a Troskyist.

Although Lynn was a small city (under 100,000), a large number of political parties had found varying support:

1. Republicans.
2. Democrats.
3. Socialist.
4. American Communist Party of Massachusetts (CO).
5. Socialist Labor.
6. Socialist Workers Party.
7. Anarchist.
8. Anti-Alcohol (Prohibition).

As well there were at least three additional groupings plus Fenians, Irish Republican Party, and other 'foreign' groups.

It appeared to me that the Thomasites had no element of risk within themselves. Somehow they wished a socialist society yet feared giving up their prerogatives in the American middle class. They were not unlike the Socialist Labor Party, which was also active in Lynn and had been so since the days of its founder Daniel DeLeon, who wanted nothing to do with union organization at all. Naturally we moved closer to the young element, all of whom were within the orbit of Trotsky. For the first time in my life, I was associated with persons near my own age who had an intense interest in the world about them beyond the idiocy of narrow, family tribal relationships, school, and an urge to find and keep a secure job without hope of improving their lives.

At about this time, the Socialist Party that had invited the CP dissidents into its midst, and who had agreed to allow these people to publish their own internal bulletins, now rejected the very agreements which had seemed a basic tenet of their belief in democracy and drove them away. In Lynn and Boston, they were a considerable number and included nearly all of the younger persons, more than ninety of whom were YPSLs.

Larry Trainor, a printer from Boston, came to Lynn as official organizer of the splinter group, and we managed to rent a meeting hall in an old building on Oxford Street. It was old and it was grimy. We managed to clean it up. We discovered that we were sharing the building with a group of 'Holy Rollers' as well as a group of very old Italian Anarchists. The religious types were noisy with their continual praying and recognition of Jesus Christ in various parts of their room. The Anarchists to a man were all over sixty and had been members of various groups in Italy before coming to the United States. Most were shoeworkers, some of whom had been apprenticed to my grandfather. They were of that generation which hired young students to read

to them in Italian, German or French while they worked at the bench in the shoe shops. Although they had become aged in the service of the Anarchist movement, they had lost none of their passion and continued their voluble defense of the American Revolution and workers' rights throughout the world. They played Boss and super-Boss and such esoteric card games far into the night. They also smoked the foulest cheroots known to the devil or mankind and the room was constantly filled with the blue smoke of Parodis that filtered down the stairs in a misty cloud. Even passing in the street one knew where their meeting hall was. I still admire their sweetness and their fierce passion ... so different from the bland persons of today. I feel it a pity that such persons have gone and not been replaced.

At this point I began to be involved in the organizational struggles in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) through the North Shore Industrial Council as a delegate from the Food Workers' Union. I was chosen to represent food workers, since I had worked as a bus boy for P.C. Hicks, Caterer. This promotion did not impress my mother or my two aunts, all of whom were deathly afraid of losing what little work they had. It may appear strange that the fate of food workers would be placed in the hands of a fourteen year old boy. At the time the CIO was really in a continuing process of organization and, except for a very small experienced core, anyone with two feet for running and at least one hand for passing out leaflets became an overnight organizer. This sure as hell beat dishwashing for a living although the pay was virtually non-existent, consisting of \$2.00 to \$5.00 hand-outs when available, or food from the various strike funds.

Quite quickly after I had joined the YPSL, I was called upon to actually do some useful work. At 02:00 one morning in spring, I received a telephone call that drove me from my warm bed on the sun porch of the house on Fayette Street. (Just one of the many houses my family occupied at various times during the 1930s.) Fortunately, my bed was close to the telephone table and awakened no one as I rolled out of

bed and grabbed the phone on its first ring. It was Johnny Poulos of the North Shore Industrial Council. He asked if I would go with him to the Irving Box Company in Salem and paint picket signs for striking fishbox workers as well as see what else they required.

Although the streetcars were usually available, they did not start running until 05:30. This meant walking the eight miles to Salem and attempting to hitch-hike. At that time there was little worry that one might be beaten up, either by the hikers or by a Good Samaritan. We managed a ride from Western Avenue, not more than a mile from my home, to Canal Street in Salem. By that time the sun had risen, and on the off-chance someone in Salem might have come alive and had materials with which to work, we walked over to the office of the Textile Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC). This group had been very active for many years in the cotton mills and recently had begun to branch out into additional skills. Wonder of wonders ... someone had remained there through the night. They were happy to represent us and willingly supplied all of the card, paint, nails and sticks we required.

Back to the Irving Box Company. Construct the signs (well, sort of) ...

IRVING BOX COMPANY WORKERS ON STRIKE.

IRVING UNFAIR TO ORGANIZED LABOR.

STRIKING FOR A LIVING WAGE ...

REPRESENTED BY THE CIO.

... and begin the picket.

For wages more miserable than anyone could imagine in these days, Irving workers were expected to work any time they were required, at any hour of the day or night, to fulfil miserable contracts for boxes for the Boston and Gloucester fish piers. After receiving a cut in pay from 30 to 50 cents/hr down to 20 or 30 cents/hr., the men felt they had had enough. Their wages had now come to such a low point that even hand-outs from the various charities looked good to them and they struck. They went on strike before they had found a union to represent them and only the North

Shore Council was prepared to jump in to the situation and that meant me, since I was young, unpaid, enthusiastic, and also unemployed. They had no previous union representation, no one to speak for them.

Those were very exciting days for me. This was my first leadership role although I had little to do beyond painting the signs and setting up a picket at the box company. The majority of the men had only slightly less experience than myself. They pitched right in with plenty of enthusiasm. They knew what they wanted and they acted out of desperation during a period when the country was just beginning to move out of the depression. They had as examples the Auto Workers Union (UAW) which had only recently staged its sit-down strikes as well as other union persons who had managed against great odds to improve their pay and working conditions. These victories, often viewed as losses by the employers, helped workers to regain dignity lost with the loss of ownership of personal tools, their descent into a world where they could own nothing but would for a lifetime be placed in bondage to banks and employers.

We knew nothing about the demands of the strikers. They hadn't been presented to the Irving Box Company. When workers are paid miserable wages and working conditions are intolerable, who worries about such things as the bureaucratic nonsense of drawing up some sort of legalistic-looking document? An immediate, in-the-street committee drew up the demands and presented them. The company refused the strikers' demands and, after a long and bitter struggle in which most of the men found employment elsewhere, Irving Box closed the building. While this strike appears to have been a fiasco, it worked to the advantage of the workers since they found better employment and, eliminated an eyesore on Canal Street was eliminated.

After the Irving strike I became involved in a strike of reporters from the *Lynn Daily Evening Item*, Lynn's foremost daily newspaper. Again I was delegated by the North Shore Industrial Council (NSIC) to give assistance to the strikers.

A headquarters of the Lynn Chapter of the American Newspaper Guild was opened in a suite of offices above Ernie Haines' ice-cream emporium. This location gave us ready access to all of the goodies downstairs. (Almost as delicious as those at Stillianos' just around the corner off Central Square.) I believe Fred Myers of the American Newspaper Guild was sent down from Boston to become general organizer. Fred was a tall, thin man with a moustache and great enthusiasm. We often drove to Saugus (Clifton), where our strike paper was printed, to pick up the paper and distribute it in the Saugus-Lynn areas. I had some small part in writing the paper and later went to work for John Hunt, publisher and heavy boozer in the newspaper tradition. John provided us with considerable assistance in the strike.

To follow this thread for a bit, John Hunt was formerly the husband of Ellie Flaherty, sister of the two Flaherty brothers of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), then working in Connecticut raising horses. Strange strike bedfellows but this was an exciting time in the labor movement as well as in politics. A great deal of time was spent in the competition for power between Trotskyites, Communist Party members and the many laborites from the old line, who were fighting against tactical changes and indeed against the very base of the American labor movement, which was based upon the craft pattern of Samuel Gompers rather than the industrial pattern for which we were fighting.

I believe it is important here to mention that there was an aura of respectability among professionals. They often did not wish to be associated with common workers and were adamant in their demand that THEIR organization be called an Association, a Guild ... almost anything but a Union. Even among American Newspaper Guild (ANG) members there was some resistance to being associated with Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

While Lynn was not by any means a 100% union city, it had a long history in the labor movement stretching all the way back to the late 18th century and the publication of the

*Cordwainer*, a newspaper published by women shoeworkers of one of the earliest unions in North America, possibly second only to the Typesetters' Union of Philadelphia. Even the Knights of Labor, of which my grandfather had been a member, came later in the middle 19th century. Gentle reader, should you receive the impression that the foregoing is felt deeply by me, you are quite correct. I have a deep feeling of pride in the development of left-wing politics and the labor movement in Lynn.

The strike at the *Lynn Item* continued for over six weeks and at times was exciting for a young man. We mounted a secondary boycott against advertisers in the newspaper and passed out thousands of leaflets in front of department stores explaining our position. Imagine my shock when, passing out leaflets in front of Himmel's Drugstore, my dear friend Anne Chernesky (later the wife of Manny Lipman) walked right past me into the store. I yelled at her ... she turned around and realized the crime she had committed. I believe both of us were equally shocked. Anne joined me in the distribution.

Several of the strikers went to jail for twenty-four hours over the law against secondary boycotts, and the law was shot down by the Massachusetts Supreme Court along with a law prohibiting "Processions, Parades, or Public Gatherings without official police permission." Surely, many of the persons I met during the strike period made considerable impression on me. Vincent O'Brien was an editor of the paper; Herb Schon, a reporter; Dick Smith, a photographer. A few persons 'scabbed' the job and remained at work during the strike. They were of little consequence.

During the newspaper strike I became a proud Associate Member of the American Newspaper Guild. Joseph Gough, proprietor of a local camera shop, employed me very much part-time and usually for no pay at all as a lab technician. Although I knew very little about photo lab work, I was a quick learner. Irving Gough, son of the owner, and I were set to cleaning out the photo 'morgue' of all of the ancient

glass plates ... breaking them and shipping them to the dump. Among the more than 1000 plates I found one of myself taken at four years old as well as many very old plates of the Great Lynn Fire and other local events dating as far back as just after the American Civil War. What a tremendous treasure trove of historical importance found its way to the Lynn Dump. (Sorry: Landfill Site.)

Whatever small wage I received, probably twenty-five cents/hour ... at the time one could purchase a very sustaining lunch for twenty-five cents: one large glass of Porter, one large hot pastrami sandwich, and all the kosher pickles one could stuff down. I must have been very happy at that time working within the unions with persons I respected and who respected my efforts in return, working on the council newspaper as well as the *Item Strike News* and a small commercial newspaper in Saugus, a nearby town. Add to those efforts my involvement with my friends in the local art world, and I must have been delirious! At least as great a pleasure in working independently was treating older persons to lunch with the small bit of pay I earned at Harold's Lynn Delicatessen upstairs over Costello's Bookstore, much earlier, a morocco leather tannery.

# 11

## Out of the Great Depression into WW2

War was certainly on everyone's mind although in the United States we were just coming out of the depression. (War is always seen as the solution to economic woes by nations in process of imperial expansion.) I continued to be very much involved in Socialist youth and union affairs. Certainly this was an exciting period for me and for the many young people with any sort of involvement in the world outside of school. Not only was the union movement rushing along at an accelerating pace but also in 1936 the Spanish Civil War had begun. This gave Socialist youth like me an additional involvement collecting aid for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It was also the year of the first convention of the newly formed Socialist Workers' Party, which was held in New York. I was privileged to attend, not representing Lynn, but as a youth delegate from Massachusetts.

Of course there was little money then for transportation and even less for hotels. Fortunately I had been washing dishes or some such thing and had a small amount of money. I hitch-hiked to Boston and bought a ticket on the Yankee. This got me to New York and Union Station from which I walked through the streets of the city, wide-eyed and no doubt bushy-tailed. I was a typical fifteen year old country-boy seeing the great city for the first time.

Somehow I managed to find the convention hall although I was late. I was domiciled with a young man from Minnesota whose name I do not recall. At the end of that

meeting-day, we proceeded to our palatial room in a flop-house in the Bowery where we took-up residence in a small room with one bed recently used and a kerosene-filled can beneath each leg of the bed. Although this precaution was supposed to prevent vermin climbing into bed with us, it is a wonder neither of us was asphyxiated by fumes, farts and the odor of crushed bedbugs.

The Automat (Horne & Hardart) was on strike. We could eat only at the cheapest places in New York. Fortune smiled upon us. We found an open door Mission not far from our room. While it could be said that we dined, since the food was 100% carbohydrate, a candy-bar would have been as useful albeit not so filling as boiled rice, white bread, coffee (weak) 'half-and-half,' half sugar and half water. Well, it was good enough then for the poor and they do little better today on Kraft macaroni and white bread.

I recall very little of the founding convention since I fell sound asleep on one of the long, leatherette benches at the rear of the hall. The benches were constructed in such a manner that, stretched out upon the bench, over 80% of one's body was smothered in leatherette. Two persons were required to awaken me and walk me about on the floor. Other sleepers suffered the same consequences. I did, however, manage to remain awake long enough to hear the speeches by Jim Cannon, Max Schachtman (later to lead a split in the SWP), Farrel Dobbs, and other members of the new party from throughout the United States. Although I do not recall the presence of either Canadians or Mexicans, I feel sure they were present. Leon Trotsky, only a few years later to be assassinated by one of Stalin's thugs (Jackson), was living in Mexico at the time but his presence was deeply felt by everyone. Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, was living in Paris and soon to die of reported food poisoning. Within this same year and to continue on, the Moscow Trials were to be rigged to 'prove' that much of the leadership of the revolution of 1917 were "enemies of the state," although it was clear to most that they were enemies of the consolidation of the state by Stalin and the new bureaucracy. Karl Radek,

Zinoviev and Kamenev were only three among the thousands who fell during the period of the Stalin terror.

In the United States most of the members of the American Communist Party seem to have gone on supporting all of Stalin's tactics ... I suppose, for many reasons, not the least of which was that many of the old-timers had found a home, and even this slight comfort was better than thinking too deeply about what was happening to the Soviet Revolution. Their excuses for support were of the "You can't make omelets without breaking eggs," or "Great changes for a better world require sacrifices." Reminds me a bit of Tonto: "Whose sacrifice, white man?"

The Spanish Civil War continued to its peak and then in 1937 began to degenerate into warfare between Stalinists and Trotskyites, the Stalinists dedicated to slaughtering Trotskyites. The Anarchists were dedicated to slaughtering anyone that got in the way. Earlier on, the United States had placed an embargo on the shipment of arms to the Republican forces. This operated only to prevent the Republicans from obtaining the weapons freely accessed by the Falangists from Germany and Italy, among others. These nations were only too happy to test out new weapons in Spain in anticipation of the coming of WW2.

Returning to Lynn from the New York City Convention was like returning to any small town. Because of the stimulus I had received, not only from the new leadership of the SWP, but also from contact with comrades from around the country, I was all hyped-up and ready to lead the Revolution. In Lynn, events were moving swiftly. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the WW2 would begin almost immediately. Within the North Shore Industrial Council, we continued to work at organizing.

At this time it was thought that we should organize a theatre to bring the work of several worker playwrights to an audience not usually found at live plays. However, it should be remembered that the 'movies' were not all that new ... there was still an entire generation around with fond memories of Chataqua entertainment. They could still recall

when putting on a play was not all that unusual. Among Italians, especially, stage-acting as well as amateur opera was quite common. There were several amateur theatre and opera companies around including the Italian Opera Comico, in which the father of my friend Gaetan Cecili took a leading role. We in the union movement organized The Guild Theatre sponsored by the American Newspaper Guild. The joint directorship was held by Humphrey Owens, a local newspaper reporter, and me, (who had very little experience beyond sitting in, on Eddie Freeman's classes at night school and spending a few weeks at Ogunquit, Maine, with members of the Manhattan Players.

We were quite ambitious in our presentations, mounting such plays as *Waiting For Lefty* by Clifford Odets and *Winterset* by Maxwell Anderson. We also wrote several short Black-outs dealing with union problems and produced much of the annual Newspaper Guild Show in Boston, where we poked fun in a very serious way at such figures as Anthony Eden and Neville Chamberlain as well as local political figures such as Boston Mayor/Governor James Michael Curley, a flamboyant figure elected practically from his jail cell. A wonderful figure, James Michael was the champion of the Irish in Boston ... probably a much larger figure than the Kennedy's grandfather, 'Honey' Fitzgerald.

Perhaps I become somewhat confused regarding the exact dates of many of my adventures. And adventures they certainly were. Despite my studies in the Socialist movement of Marx, Engels and Leon Trotsky, and my slight contacts with such persons as Max Schachtman and C.L.R. James, as well as James Cannon and Farrell Dobbs, I was far too young to be a Marxist intellectual. My life was exciting and adventuristic and that was enough. 1935, and I was involved with the Spanish Civil War in that I collected money and certainly talked it up with everyone with whom I came in contact.

Sherry Mangan was a journalist as well as a Trotskyist. Sherry Mangan was from Lynn, and his family had been quite big in the shoe business. The Sherry building just off

Market Square had been named for his grandfather. I had met him perhaps two years prior to 1936 at Byron Hall in Boston, where he impressed me because of his enormous capacity for booze. He wrestled with Bonnie Zief of Atlas Radio after downing nearly a fifth of Scotch and then, when the match was completed, cooled himself off with a quart of beer. Incredible! I was really not much of a drinker ... but still impressed.

One morning in 1938, Johnny Poulos, John Hall and I were walking up Central Avenue in Lynn. Just in front of Bennie Olanoff's Lynn Luggage Shop, I saw a broad back dressed in tweed. I knew immediately that it was Sherry Mangan. But we had heard that, after writing the story of the fall of Paris for *Life and Time* magazine, Mangan had disappeared. And yet here he was. I muttered his name and he turned to recognize us. It was a welcome reunion to know that he had survived. Over coffee in Hunt's restaurant, Sherry explained to us that he had just made it out of France as the Germans advanced into the cité. He had managed to get to Lisbon and catch a freighter to New York and returned home to Lynn to visit his mother.

Many years later, I believe it was several years after WW2, we found that Mangan had died in Rome and the police had sealed his apartment. It was suggested to me (by whom I do not recall) that I might go to Rome and get into his apartment to see if there were any documents in which the American movement might be interested. For some reason the idea was dropped. Mangan had been writing socialist articles under the name of Terrance Phelan for several years prior to his death. I presume the reason was to avoid conflict between his *Life and Time* job and his Trotskyist leanings. Of course, he was not the only person of prominence close to the Trotskyists during that period. Such persons included James T. Farrell, John Dos Passos, and many other writers as well.

Other persons of note in the Socialist Workers' Party, or persons well known in their fields of expertise, came to Lynn to speak to us. I recall a 'non-meeting' at a local Greek

restaurant on Andrew Street, where a group of us had a supper with Max Schachtman, Larry T. John P., and John Hall. Schachtman had just returned from Greece and spoke to us of the coming WW2. Everyone on the street was well aware of these events in Europe.

Few in government wished to acknowledge that we were on the verge of a terrible war, and those that spoke of it were dismissed as Fear mongers or left-wing isolationists. We were not totally unaware of warfare. Many of us had been born just after WW1 and had fathers, uncles or even brothers that had recounted their experiences. My friend Morrice Montour, a driver at P.C. Hicks, caterer, had been exposed to mustard gas in France and continued to suffer the hacking, destructive cough which eventually rotted out his lungs. For this suffering he received a small pension and the "thanks and appreciation of a grateful government for his sacrifice." There were one-legged, no-legged, one-arm or half-a-face men not quite hidden from the public eye. We learned that the very worse cases were tucked away out of sight, some at the Chelsea Veterans' Hospital, others in a Vets' Hospital in Western Massachusetts.

The Spanish Civil War was very much on our minds within the Socialist movement. It did appear that the Socialist Party was of two minds in the situation whereas the Socialist Workers' Party took a definite stand in favor of wholehearted support of the Republicans. The Fascist side was either completely supported by world opinion, (stemming from all the 'best' governments) or by class populations without the power to affect outcome. Both Italy and Germany supplied arms and, in many cases, highly trained military units to the Franco forces. The capitalist governments immediately supported an embargo against the supplying of arms to either side. This decision not only worked against the popularly elected government but also worked to the advantage of the Fascists. I met many of the members of both the International Brigade and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Many persons from the United States (Milton Levin of Lynn) and Canada joined up to fight Fascism on its home

ground, realizing that Spain was just the prelude to a world calamity. Although I was not among them, I was active in collecting funds and in other ways.

The nature of political argument centred on the following themes: Beneath the struggle for wages and working conditions continued the struggle to gain some measure of independence from the frustration of being without 'tools.' (In Marxist terms: without the ownership of the means of production.) Perhaps the attitude harks back to a "Paradise Lost" but it is no less real. Most Americans felt that they had been freemen when they worked on the farm prior to entering urban life. No matter that farm life may have often been miserable, one was definitely independent. If the work remained undone, it would accumulate and the farmer would be the one to suffer. That, in itself, is the measure of independence. On the other hand, city workers ... factory workers ... are expendable. There is always another pair of hands and another brain standing in line waiting to be exploited.

Today I find the vast difference between 'work' and 'employment' difficult to explain to people. Work is a necessary human demand for survival. Employment is merely the use of one person for the profit of another and little human dignity is involved in that stance. Corporations such as General Electric and General Motors have spent millions of dollars attempting to 'adjust' the workers to their task ... to 'encourage employees to consider themselves a part of one great family'. These methods have been effective only with the small minority of workers yearning for paternalism. All workers are aware of this problem in the depths of their being but have great difficulty solving it. Even the few who manage to become allegedly independent tradesmen are not truly independent ... they become the 'thing' of their suppliers and their customers. Their suppliers 'allow' them discounts related to various promotional schemes or related to quantity or related to 'prizes.' All of these scams are designed to chain the independent tradesman more firmly to the supplier. For most workers

the solution to the problem of being without tools is simply to deny the truth of their position. They are then allowed to occupy one of the many shades of middle classness. Most workers would describe themselves as 'lower middle class'. The act of denial carries with it the hope that one may rise ... presumably, to 'middle class'. The fact of the matter is that what they would call a middle class is fast disappearing in North America, as an increasing number of corporations move offshore and no longer require a buffer between an upper class and a true working class. What goes round comes round again and we are fast returning to feudalism albeit on a global scale.

Years later during our residence at St. Ignace, New Brunswick in 1982, I had many conversations with my neighbors, most of whom I liked. One morning, in the midst of a conversation about lumbering, the price of gasoline, high taxes, and the price of mink pelts, I realized that the 'oil baron' of whom we spoke was K.C. Irving of New Brunswick, the same Irving who, years in the past, had been the owner of the Irving Box Company of Salem, Massachusetts. An exploiter if there ever was one. I recounted my earlier experience and was informed: "Well, it's his own money, isn't it?" I continued my assault: He was the same Irving who ran to the Bahamas to avoid taxes in Canada. I pointed out that Irving had squirreled away enough money in foreign banks by paying low wages and working people under poor conditions to improve vastly the medical and welfare plans of the province and still live comfortably 'off-shore' for the rest of his life. Of course I received the same answer: "Well, it's his money." And this from a man struggling on a subsistence farm to keep his head above water and support a family. Do most people continue this myth or are they simply, in denial and despair, living at some level on the hope that one day they may be rich themselves and answerable to no one (so they believe).

I believe there is no question but that the emergence of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) out of the elitist American Federation of Labor (AF of L) was a

progressive move, as the melding of both union organizations was a retrograde move at a later date and represented an increasing conservatism within a comfortable leadership. Perhaps the only union movement to maintain some semblance of loyalty to working class traditions has been the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). No doubt most organizations are formed in times of adversity when the only way to move out of despair is to a higher level of action. The mainstream union organizations have become comfortable and are dying because of their comfort. Now workers have been hoodwinked into believing that they can 'own their own home' (the great American dream). Even a cursory examination of the fluctuations of mortgage rates and changes in employment will show that home ownership for the majority of persons is a chimera created by those who have most to lose and who benefit most: the banks, and their investors who are the directors of the corporations by which the workers are employed. These also include that long line of persons such as, construction corporations, real estate agents, and lawyers. I doubt that 10% of all persons paying mortgages on ageing homes litteraly own their homes free-and-clear.

## 12

### Shunted to Nova Scotia

Since I could not keep my mouth shut but had to spend my idle minutes talking up union organizations, working for P.C.Hicks, Caterer, became increasingly difficult and especially for my mother as a waitress. My friendship with John Gardner and Beatrice Valier must have begun around this time. I recall John's picketing the Lynn Food Center. Approaching the picket line from a considerable distance, I could hear this sonorous Yankee voice: "This place is un-fayah to ohganized l-a-b-o-u-r-e." .... All the words nasal and long drawn out. John was a schoolteacher from Maine as well as a carpenter turned boat builder. I have no idea what attracted him to the labor movement. He was no more an unlikely figure than John Brooks Wheelwright (poet and scion of a wealthy Boston Brahman family), or many other young persons stimulated by great social changes. During WW2 John Gardner worked for the General Electric Company as a machine-operator.

"John, why do you work on the second shift when you have enough seniority to work on the first shift?" "Wal, my best hours are from 5 a.m. to noontime and I see no reason why G.E. should have this advantage. Let them have my stupid hours. From 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. "

John later became one of the best writers on small craft in the US and also curator of small craft for the Mystic Maritime Museum of Mystic, Connecticut, where he wrote and had published several books dealing with the intricacies of wooden boat building. I had some very slight involvement

with his book *The Dory Book* and John was kind enough to send me a copy. I value our relationship and the much I learned from him. At the time I was fired from General Electric in 1952, I managed to pick up a few dollars as a rough carpenter but had very few tools with which to impress a boss. John gave me a nearly complete set of tools including a very large, 3" boat chisel with a 20" handle. It was an unusual tool for a modern carpenter and an almost extinct tool for a boat builder at a time when nearly all boats were being formed of plastics.

In the fall of 1937 or early in 1938, the family must have agreed among themselves that I was becoming dangerously involved in Socialist politics and the trade union movement. Perhaps they saw things from a skewed view. Grandfather and grandmother had certainly suffered for a time when Herbie was blacklisted from the 'shoe.' Perhaps my mother and her new husband Nathan-the-postal-clerk felt uneasy with my activities. The family's solution was to get me out of Lynn and into Nova Scotia.

Industry had perished in Nova Scotia just after the American Civil war (1861-65) when profiteering collapsed. WW1 gave the general economy a boost when thousands sailed down to the "Boston States" to work in the munitions plants. Fortunes were made by a few Maritimers building ships, making shoddy uniforms for the northern troops as well as for the confederacy.

The issue of slavery had been laid to rest a hundred years in the past by the British (1833). The death of the last black slave in Nova Scotia didn't take place until mid-nineteenth century. I suspect many Scotians of fundamentalist bent were quite content to characterize blacks as Sons of Ham and therefore in their proper place in the world. Enmity continued among Roman Catholics and Protestants as tribal wars of ancient times continued to be re-fought.

By the time I was twelve, I had abandoned any ideas I might have had of continuing to attend Sunday school although I DID burn incense before a small plaster figure of the Lord Buddha in my bedroom, causing a certain

excitement in the family ... I think it was their fear of fire rather than their fear that I had gotten to whoring after strange gods.

Winter is a dull time. Any topic is welcome including interminable discussions and inventions of "Ways in which gravity may be denied." Or "God's intentions regarding the marriage of first cousins." Let's not omit the discussion re building a perpetual motion machine, always a useful topic after crops, weather, fishing, weather, hunting weather, and "The God-damned British left Canadian troops to die at Chateau Thierry."

Well, certainly it wasn't all argument and starvation. There was great fiddle playing. The distance between the little store at Wallace, where I bought Black Cat cigarettes for ten cents with large pennies, and our farm was less than 1/2 mile. When the townies saw our cousin Will Branders walk over the Wallace Bridge with his fiddle bag under his arm, a gathering began. By the time it reached our house, there may have been as many as ten men and boys following and ready to make music.

Will Branders was from Spring Hill and worked a few days a week at the Wallace Quarry. He was a large man, made larger still by enormous hands like great soft boxing gloves from hand-cutting stone for many years. It seemed incredible that these hands could play a fiddle and hold it gently as though it were a baby.

I was sent down from Lynn to Nova Scotia to live with my cousin George Dwyer, an old 'bach' from Lynn who had bought a farm at Wallace Bridge. I believe Cousin George had been a passionate man in his youth and seemed to have lost little of his fire as his age advanced. Rumor had it that he had received ... "a dose of the clap from some girl in the shoe shop and had sworn off from women forever, escaping to NS to live out his life."

I have some difficulty with this version ... George continued to seem quite feisty. His story was that he had loaned money to establish the Volunteer Yacht Club in Lynn. They never repaid him. He had left for the Maritimes in

disappointment, vowing never to return to “Lynn, Lynn, the city of sin, the nastiest city I’ve ever been in.” Well, either George bought the farm or it had been in the family for years and he simply took it over.

The farmhouse was scarcely 100 yards from the banks of the Wallace River and within shouting distance of Wallace Bridge. The house was, like many Maritime houses, built in three sections. The front section was of two storeys. Behind that, the kitchen section was a single storey and beyond the kitchen was a very large and necessary woodshed, which also contained a rough ladder reaching into a loft that ran the entire length of the house. Although by this time, (my second visit) there was running water in the pantry, it came from an ever-running spring deep within the dirt cellar where also the milk and cream were set to keep cool. The cellar was very deep and filled with large wooden bins commodious enough to hold at least a ton of potatoes, cabbages, carrots, parsnips, squash ... all of the vegetables necessary to the nourishment of a large farm family. When there was meat, deer, beef or birds of various sorts usually dried or smoked, it was hung on hooks surrounding the well escarpment. Upstairs in the large kitchen was the area where most activity took place. There was an old chaise-lounge for sleeping; occupied by the fire guard during the very coldest of winter nights ... someone had to be awake enough to keep the kitchen fire going.

During that winter in Nova Scotia, I quickly learned about survival. Many years later, the experience was to prove of value in my return to Nova Scotia and to New Brunswick. There was so much snow that winter we could not leave the house to buy food at the Wallace Bridge store and had to depend upon what little victuals we could scrounge. George felt that there might be some smoked fish, “... up there in the loft. It might still be fit to eat.” He did not mention that the fish had been hung for many years. The fish were Gaspereaux. At the best of times they would have been thin and excessively bony. After years of hanging, they had lost what little fat they may have had and were thin

enough to transmit a golden light when held to the only window in the loft. Bringing half-a-dozen fish down into the kitchen, I set them to stewing in water, which I would change several times. In the pantry I discovered three barrels that had once contained flour ground in our own mill right on the property. From the barrels I managed to scrape enough flour for a sort of bannock-bread to be made with a bit of cream o' tartar. I must have changed the water on the Gasperaux at least five times before deciding that we might tear a few bits from the carcasses and eat them in a salt soup, in which I cooked a bit of ancient cabbage and parsnip.

For three days until the snow ceased, we could not get out on snowshoes to make our way to the store ... we lived on salt soup, bannock, and reboiled tea. In Massachusetts, where many Nova Scotians were born, the winters were both snowy and cold but rarely both together. Not so in Nova Scotia on the Straits of Northumberland .... There we managed to have both great amounts of snow and intense cold at the same time. So much snow and so cold that Ferdinand, George's yearling bull destined for the slaughter, managed a reprieve for nearly a month, since the man who would do the killing could not get his truck to the house. The latter was not the only reason for Freddie's reprieve. George was so tender-hearted he could not bear to see the bull hung above the spring. George also kept chickens. Well, hardly chickens. Some of those birds must have been nearly as old as I and were nearly weightless as well as featherless in a moderate wind.

Like most farms of the period, our farm was virtually self-contained and cash money was rarely seen in any quantity. As I recall, there were at least seven buildings including a four-hole outhouse. Beyond and to the right of the house, the barn was an imposing structure, warm and snug for Babe, Harry and Babe's new and unnamed colt of the previous spring. During that first big snowstorm, the horses had not been let out of their stalls for three days. When the storm ceased and the sun once more shone, we opened the doors of the barn to the outside. Both Babe and Harry

immediately made a dash for the outer world and began rolling in the snow to remove the stable dirt they had accumulated. Imagine the thunder of more than three thousand pounds of horse thumping and rolling in snow! The colt came to the door, looked out and ran back to her box. Babe went in after her and prodded the colt out the door and into a snow bank. Only for a moment or two was the little horse confused and she then joined in the fun, attempting to eat all of the snow in the yard.

To the side of the barn and some twenty yards away lay the grain storage and grist mill where all of our own grain was ground into the various sizes and textures needed both by the other animals and ourselves. Occupying the first floor was an enormous diesel engine used to grind the grain as well as operate the shingle mill where George lost his thumb trying to free a stuck shingle. After years in the shoe factories of Lynn, Massachusetts where he operated a 'dinking' machine cutting soles for shoes, George had to come back to Novy and lose his thumb in a shingle mill. Not the end of the story: George, wrapping his injured hand with its dangling thumb in an old handkerchief, walked the mile and a half to the doctor in Wallace, where the member was stitched back almost in place ... not quite ... he could never thumb a ride adequately again.

To break our diet of bannock, tea and Gasperaux shingles, I went hunting for partridge in the nearby woods with my single-shot .22 caliber rifle. (\$4.50 at Eaton's ... long ago.) The birds were so tame or so hungry that I had to push them out of the way of my toes before I could shoot them. Poor skinny little birds of winter's hunger. Although neither soft-hearted George nor I shot deer or moose, neighbors brought deer meat when the weather was clear and travel possible.

Early one morning a neighbor came to the door: "George, can I borrow a couple of cartridges?" "Help yourself." The neighbor knew where the guns and ammunition were kept. Everyone knew every house in the village and the contents of every house. Late that afternoon when George and I

returned from the barn, on the kitchen table lay a large salmon, all gutted and ready for the pan. Few words were ever exchanged in these matters. Everyone knew that the RCMP frowned upon this stealing of the Crown's fish, and everyone (certainly all of the Scots) ignored the Crown and the RCMP. Life in Nova Scotia was not a lawless life. The people simply chose what laws were useful and which were useless to their habits of living. Laws were passed in Halifax or in that far off place, Ottawa, and had little to do with Wallace Bridge.

After the big snow the Wallace River was frozen all the way to the Straits of Northumberland and it was time for the herring-run to begin. Nova Scotians were not called "Herring-chokers" for nothing although, among the more sensitive, the expression was considered somewhat low class. These habits of behavior seem to arise when the price of a commodity falls. The harvesting of herring for personal use as well as for sale had been a part of Nova Scotia life as far back as the 17th century when the streams had been almost full enough to walk upon the backs of the herring and the salmon. Frostfish or Gaspereaux were so common as to be ignored. In 1936 the catch was still good although it had fallen. On each side of the Wallace River, a 'dead-man' or log was driven into the banking. To these a cable was stapled and led across the river. The seine was fastened along the cable and stretched from bank to bank. A large, open barge floated parallel to the cable and net. Just at the change of the tide, after the herring had swum upriver and were beginning to come down again, the net was lowered into the water and collected the fish, which were then scooped into the waiting barge, to be brought ashore, packed in barrels with salt and shipped down to Boston or to Halifax. Even in those pre-WW2 days, ferries ran from Halifax and Yarmouth on frequent trips to Boston and New York. Cities like Ottawa and Toronto were "foreign parts," and middle-Canada was unknown country although the far West (because of the gold) was quite familiar.

‘The Boston States’ were continued to be very much considered ‘home,’ as were Bangor and Portland, Maine. Many young persons as well as older men rode the potato trains from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick down to Boston. A fare was not required ... just keeping the fires going at each end of the freight car was pay enough. Surely it was not until WW2 that any special notice was taken of persons crossing the Canada/US border ... rarely more than a nod and wave of the hand from the border guards. Once the new security bureaucracy was set up there was no stopping it and it continues and expands to this day. The increased security seems to have solved nothing, and in fact there are probably more criminals crossing the border in either direction than ever before, some of them undoubtedly considered security risks.

I imagine that the gleam of gold from far-off Sutter’s Mill in California was so bright and the trip west so arduous that few gold-seekers noticed much between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. After I had been living with George Dwyer for a few months, we were visited by an old friend named Frank. A thoroughly fascinating man, Frank had been a gold miner in California and wore a large gold nugget on his watch-chain. His trade was that of blacksmith/toolmaker. The tools he made and the tools I had the honor of learning to make were chisels and rock drills. We had a large order from the quarry nearby to make several sets of fine chisels, cleaners, liners and tools of other shapes principally to cut and finish the stone for the facade of a building at the Catholic College at Antigonish.

Of all the jobs I had had over the past seven years, working as a blacksmith apprentice was one of the most interesting. Our iron came from Eaton’s in Moncton in the form of long, hexagonal black rods. These we would saw into proper lengths of ten to twelve inches, then finish off the ends neatly before setting them into the forge where they would remain until nearly white hot from the pumping of air from the bellows into the blazing coals. Removing the heated rods, I would hold them on the anvil while Frank

beat them into rough shape before re-heating the piece and placing it between a steel finish form. At this point the final pounding and beating would take place. The piece, now a fully-formed tool, would again be re-heated and plunged into a tub of heavy oil to cool slowly.

Frank was not simply a blacksmith but a highly trained toolmaker in the old style, having served his apprenticeship in a day when the apprentice was indentured for a period of four years and lucky to be paid anything at all. The newly made tools were thoroughly cleaned and lightly oiled before being placed each in a clay crucible surrounded by bits and pieces of bone, copper and lump manganese. The crucible was then tightly wired closed before it was set in the forge to heat nearly white-hot again. I suspect that the tool itself was considerably cooler than the crucible. At this point, using a pair of giant tongs, the toolmaker plunged the box deeply into the oil where it would remain until it could be removed by hand and opened. After being cleaned and oiled, the chisel was sharpened roughly, since each stonemason had his own technique. The finished tools gleamed with red, blue, green and, purple lights! Frank explained that all tools were once made this way and he felt that letting them go out into the world in any other condition would be sacrilegious. Being a blacksmith/toolmaker was a real priesthood as it is among the swordmakers of Japan to this day. Working with Frank for so short a time, I hardly became a toolmaker. Certainly I learned many techniques to add to my skills and am in debt to the blacksmith. One hopes I have passed on some of these skills to Ben and Kai, our children.

One day as I poked around the loft above the kitchen looking for more Gaspereaux, turning over the usual flotsam and jetsam of houses occupied by generations going back a century or more, I found in a dusty corner beneath the eaves a green sea chest with rope handles. Lifting the chest by one corner, I found it quite light and assumed it to be empty but decided that since it appeared to have no lock or hasp, I would open it. I lifted its cover and, sure enough, the chest

was empty ... or so it appeared. On further investigation at one end of the chest I found a somewhat loose, vertical panel at the bottom of which was a considerable space, with a drawer at the bottom of the divider. Removing the drawer, I found it empty but also found that the divider itself would slide upward out of the chest to reveal another drawer, cleverly concealed, which could be opened by a small slot in the edge of the drawer. Within I found several buttons dating to the early 19th century as well as a bundle of papers.

I brought everything to the kitchen where the light was better and unfolded the papers. They were a complete ship's log, the manifest which listed the cargo, the sign-on papers of the crew, and several letters.

"The schooner *Juvenale*, Master, Captain Thomas Walker, out of Pugwash and sailing to the Barbados with a cargo of salt fish, lumber and sundries, set sail from Pugwash this day —and month— year 1847."

The bundle included as well an attestation by King's Magistrate, Patrican of Canso. It appears that the schooner was beset by bad luck almost from the moment it set sail. A great gale, which drove the ship back into harbor from the Cape of Cans, required replacement of rigging and a new beginning ... only to be followed by a fire on deck which burned a part of the deck cargo as well as burning and "carrying away of rigging." In addition to these dour events, the sign-on papers of the crew indicated that many could only sign as "Wm. Frost, (His X)." Included also was a letter with a request: "Capt. Walker, if it please you please return with a quantity of O-ranges as well as Cocoa-nuts. Any other unusual oddities would be greatly appreciated." Unfortunately, all these papers disappeared from my hands long ago.

To a sixteen year old much of what happens in the country is boring. We had a few books to read: several small school texts of Wm. Shakespeare, a dictionary, a Holy Bible, a few of the 'Little Blue Books' published in Chicago at the turn of the century, and a peculiar and frightening book entitled *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by Father Chiniquay,

a revelatory text on the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. I remember only a few lines: "... and the priest fled from the widow's house, the front of his cassock all bloodied from his illicit relations." Now, that was enough to scare the hell out of a young man. The lines did not put me off the dreams of sex, but it surely inhibited any action on my part even when faced with the daughter of the local timber magnate, home for the holidays from her nurses' school in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

1937 was drawing to a close and I, (despite my anti-christian stance) wanted to be back in Lynn for Christmas and New Year's celebrations. The bus from Moncton to Boston ran infrequently, probably as a result of the weather and unpaved roads of the time, and it was also nearly a day's ride in George's old model 'A' Ford. Except for a moose stepping directly into the road in front of us and staring at the Ford with the light of passion in its beady little eyes, the ride to the big city of Moncton was uneventful.

Moncton was a bustling city although the depression was at its worst and crowds of ill-dressed men milled about on the streets and in front of the labor contractors' shops. 1937 was on the eve of the beginning of WW2 and, although many of the residents of the city were English, probably many more were French Canadian or Scottish Canadian. They had little love for the English and little reason to repeat their mistakes of WW1 when so many had lost their lives fighting for the 'Widow of Windsor.' My relatives at Spring Hill, Nova Scotia, never forgot that cousin Tennis, a machine-gunner, was slaughtered along with others from the town. With names like MacBurney, Branders, Woodbury and even a few Therriens and Landrys sprinkled in here and there, it is no wonder there was considerable resistance to involvement with the Crown.

# 13

## Marriage and Work

A feeling of excitement began to run through workers everywhere. Although union organization continued, it began to decelerate in response to the promise of jobs ... jobs for everyone for the first time since WW1. Suddenly capital was available to open the factories and to build newer and larger factories. Somehow none of this enormous cornucopia of capital had been accessible for the past ten years to improve human life, but now it became available as a means of slaughtering the young.

Of course, all of these promised riches were based upon war in Europe which had begun in September, 1939. But the war would never reach North America. Didn't President Roosevelt promise, "American boys will not fight on foreign soil"? Hitler ... whoever he was ... would be rapidly defeated. But not too rapidly. The Jews? Well, there were intimations that many were being dispossessed of their wealth but who cared about that? These were by no means the only reactions to War in Europe. "Japanese on the West Coast are interned," about as innocuous a statement as possible. I had never met a Japanese. At that time, beyond a nodding acquaintance with operas *Madame Butterfly* and the *Mikado*, I knew nothing about the Japanese people. Not so unusual ... there were few Japanese in New England and, to my knowledge, none in Nova Scotia. As the Germans were pictured in the propaganda posters as raging brutes, so were the Japanese soldiers presented to us as buck-toothed little men wearing horn-rimmed glasses ... stabbing the helpless children of

Shanghai with bayonets. Well, the war would be over soon, so we had no fear of being sent to the East. 'Our boys' were already mopping up Hitler's legions in Europe, so we could feel pretty safe in our newly found jobs at General Electric.

In the United States among the Yankee population, the American Revolution was still remembered; and the Civil War, where the British and their Canadian colonists had made fortunes for their entrenched upper-class, had occurred within the living memories of aged men riding in open automobiles during Memorial Day and Fourth of July parades. These Yankees wanted nothing to do with the war in Europe except to make money out of it ... a time-honored pursuit. For the great mass of immigrants that had arrived in the US between 1905 and 1929, their memories were current. Memories of relatives left behind in Poland and other European countries. Memories not only of relatives and friends but memories of escaping Czarist press gangs and the frequent calling up of classes of young men to serve in the armies of tin-pot rulers. Youth sacrificed to the whims of corrupt monarchs and their governments. Yes, even during the thirties, there were kings and queens in Europe. Few immigrants wished to return to the miserable life they had led in the old country ... especially since their misery in the US was about to be relieved. Isolationism and an 'America First' movement began to gather momentum: "American boys will not be sacrificed upon the battlefields of a corrupt Europe." These fine and idealistic sentiments were soon forgotten in the drive to profit from that war in "corrupt Europe."

Although the factories began once more to open their gates, a peculiar situation arose: A great majority of immigrants were skilled only in the methods of primitive farming and had little education. Upon their arrival many had been forced into the urban landscape and never escaped to the farm life of which they dreamed or achieved the ownership of land. Even those Americans not so newly arrived had been forced from the farm and into the cities and technology on the farm had passed them by. Often their

knowledge of the gasoline engine stopped at the old 'make-and-break' engines: "Once ya get 'em started they run all day, but don't dast shut 'em off or they may not start again for days." Industry, rather than attempt to retrain these hundreds of thousands of workers in a complexity of skills, turned to the assembly lines of Henry Ford and others. It was found much cheaper to build more complex machines that could be operated with a minimum of skill, especially since government was throwing money around by the barrelful to encourage production.

What a commentary on any society that money could be found to prosecute a war almost immediately, but money could not be found for human needs. Children continued to be gouged out of dimes for the overseas missions. Charity ... sweet charity did not of course extend to German or Japanese children, since we were encouraging the slaughter of their parents. Perhaps a few children were also hit as bombs fell randomly, but one could not help, if the sins of the fathers also fell upon the sons. (Today we have sanitized war, and the death of thousands becomes 'Collateral Damage' which may be blamed upon inadequate machines.)

All this beauty was bound to come to an end. For the first time in my life I had what every young person wanted, a woman and a steady job, a condition unknown since 1929. I had met Asunta Zappacosta (Sue) at the union dance through her sister Gilda and Gilda's first husband, Harold Grant. I did not dance and had to refuse the invitation of this tall, dark young woman with the large nose.

Now I am quite certain if I had been able to sleep with her, we would never have married. However, every class has its own attitudes, its own code of moral values handed down to it by the class to which it aspires and modified by its life conditions and the development of the society. These transfers of values work in both ways. The upper classes, isolated in their palaces and seeking new sensation, adopt certain of the language of the street, and the classes below adopt the *passé* language and attitudes of the upper classes. Persons of my generation had left their very early agrarian

working-class attitudes behind and had wholeheartedly adopted the strait-jacket morality of the Victorians. These mores included no premarital sex. I was young, idealistic and stupid. Except for a few frustrated attempts I had never been to bed with a woman. I can't say that it was not accomplished by my contemporaries although I would not be surprised to find that most of them were in the same situation and probably married for much the same reason or lack of reason. Although we certainly spent much time bragging of our conquests, I doubt we were quite the Lotharios we pretended. I was only twenty years old. Sue was twenty-two. My mother had to go to City Hall with me to obtain my marriage licence.

In April of 1941 Sue and I were married by the Reverend Garfield Morgan in the living room of his house on Basset Street, Lynn, Massachusetts. Both families were present although I do not recall any friends. I was working on the WPA (Works Progress Administration), a large Federal project siphoning money into the states to keep workers busy while WW2 was being engineered. My job paid \$88.80 each month. Sue was making about \$34.00 a week as a meter shaft polisher at the West Lynn Works of the General Electric Company, the largest employer in the city, since much of the shoe business had either gone bankrupt or had moved to the wilds of Maine and New Hampshire to escape union organization and gain cheap, half-starved labor. On our wages we were not uncomfortable and could afford a three-room apartment on West Baltimore Street. No new housing to speak of had been constructed in Lynn since prior to 1925, and the West Baltimore street address was several cuts above a West Lynn address although a few steps below Nahant Street ... right in the middle.

Despite the fact that I had been politically conscious for several years, the war period constituted a hiatus ... a period when I had little interest in pursuing political aims or, at least, of acting upon them. Just prior to the war a very serious discussion had been going on within the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP). The two sides of the question: Is the Soviet

Union a workers' state or is it, in fact, a form of state capitalism with a thoroughly entrenched bureaucracy calling the shots? The Cannonites (followers of the then chairman James Cannon) and, as it turned out, the winners of the argument, concluded that the USSR continued to be a workers' state, albeit a corrupted version, principally because the revolution of 1917 was a FACT and had changed the entire face of productive/social relations of the state. Max Schachtman took the view that the Soviet Union was a form of state capitalism and would continue to develop along those lines. (In 2002, of course, the entire ball game appears to have changed and Russia, which no longer exists as an entity, is hell-bent to become a capitalist super-state. There may, however, exist a vast difference between the Western world's media perception and the reality.)

Almost coincidentally with the split in the SWP in favor of the Cannonite position, the entire leadership of the Party was arrested under the quickly cobbled up Smith Act, which tied in quite nicely with the Alien and Sedition Acts of WW1 vintage. The leadership was imprisoned under that part of the Act that implied that the Trotskyists had sought to overthrow the duly constituted government by force and violence rather than by constitutional means. Of course this charge was ridiculous. The SWP was so small it could not elect a local dog-catcher let alone mount a revolution. Rare indeed is a small political party which can effectually mount a revolution among workers satisfied with their lot. It was even more absurd to believe that workers having an opportunity for the first time since 1928 to have steady employment would even think of revolting against the pig that was offering its teats. After a quick trial most of the leadership including James Cannon was imprisoned. The decision was later overturned and they were released.

According to the party history this business goes back quite a way. During the 1930s the Teamsters' Union of Minneapolis struck for higher wages. Cannon as well as the Dunn brothers (Vincent and Bill) and Farrell Dobbs (editor of the *Militant*, organ of the SWP) were also the leadership

of the Teamsters' local, as well as being members of the former Communist block within the union, and Trotskyists. The strike action was contrary to the orders of the national executive of the Teamsters' Union led by Daniel Tobin. Dan Tobin was an ardent supporter of Franklin Dellano Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. Reams could be written about the Tobin/Roosevelt connections with some of the previous characters of the teamsters' underworld. In any event Tobin called in his markers and Roosevelt was a leading light in the arrest and conviction of the SWP leadership. (See: Pathfinder Press catalogues.)

I sided with the Cannonists, but my personal struggles led me away from the party during that period. I was newly married and busy setting up a household and getting used to the new condition. I had also lost my job on the Works Progress Administration because of cut-backs and preparations for WW2 and had obtained part-time work as second cook at Luther Witham, Caterer. Since Sue had now become the principal breadwinner, such a condition could not be tolerated at that time and in that generation and I had to find a more permanent job. The Party itself was winding down as a result of the enormous pressure on everyone to support the war effort and, except being somewhat active in the Foods Union, and as co-director of the Guild Theatre, I simply dropped most of my activities. We could not ignore the fact that jobs, for the first time in nearly twelve years, were becoming available with the opening of alleged Defense Plants. (After 1940 what had been the War Department became the Defense Department.)

One morning, crossing the meadow behind the Lynn English High School on my way to work at Witham's, I espied a fifty-cent piece in the grass and felt this was a time to bus to the General Electric Company and see what my prospects would be. When I arrived at the employment office, I was given the usual run around and told that without experience there would be nothing for me. This sort of answer always pissed me off: "Without experience, how can I get experience?" Manager Albert Coe informed me that

that was not his problem, and I stomped out of the office. Since I had to pass the office of Mr. Alexander, head of the entire personnel department, I figured nothing ventured, nothing gained. The receptionist said that Mr. Alexander was neither in nor expected for several hours. I was desperate and since my absenteeism probably had cost my job at Witham's anyway, I decided to wait. I sat for three hours before he showed up and, after conferring with the secretary, immediately invited me in.

As Alexander reviewed my application, he inquired about my interests. When I told him general science and that I was familiar with laboratory instruments through my earlier contact with the Campbell Brothers' X-ray Company, he perked up, and we had a good discussion about x-rays and television, which was in its very earliest stages.

Mr. Alexander then called Robert Coe to come to his office and find me a job. Coe did not like this a bit. Returning to his office with me in tow, he found me a job running a stamping mill, a machine towering over me, used for stamping out motor parts. When the operator showed me how to stamp down on the pedal, I followed his instructions and was nearly thrown into the air. I was simply too light to operate the machine and Coe knew this very well. Back to Personnel, where Coe gave a poor report on me.

Bless Alexander ... He asked: "What about the job as binocular inspector over in the Turbine Dept?" Coe: "Well, the boy has no experience." Alexander: "He knows how to use a microscope and calipers and it's about time he GOT some experience." I was sent to Building 32, where I was placed under the supervision of Foreman MacInerny, a man with one foot lost in the service of the GE, and a tolerant man who would not last too long under the pressures of wartime work. Although I was required to work the 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm shift, (at that time, 'The Graveyard Shift,') I was happy as a lark and could not wait to get home. My salary was \$40.00/week, of which I got all except for a few cents. At that time income tax was not deducted at the source, an innovation which would soon come about and which

was sponsored as “A measure necessary to efficiently prosecute the defense effort, and which would be removed at the end of the war.” However, it continued to be automatically deducted. We reject change, accept change, forget why the change, and accept slavery as normal.

I had had many crummy little jobs since my introduction to the labor market at age fourteen. The General Electric was my first full-time job in a vast industrial complex ... a series of factories so large that they occupied the area of a small town. This was the River Works plant and was a mile down Western Avenue from the West Lynn plant, which was a mile below the Allerton street factories. Obviously General Electric Co. had usurped the power once held by the shoe factories to become the third largest corporation on earth (2002).

I was put to work inspecting for flaws in small steel buckets (turbine blades for the Turbo-supercharger in aircraft). The job required the use of a binocular microscope and considerable hand dexterity. Apparently I performed well (several years previously I had flunked-out on a manual dexterity test at the West Lynn Works), and I got along with the rest of my night-working zombie companions. The plant was daily increasing in size and soon I transferred to a job where I was required to operate first one and eventually three milling machines. The job was on piecework, which was time-studied frequently to the distress of the workers.

This time-study system was based upon the work of Fernand Braudel, a French citizen with a great affinity for Adolph Hitler and Fascism. Perhaps the links between GE, Braudel and Dr. Zinser with agreements between German industrials for the payment of royalties on Carbide tool materials during WW2 should be followed at a later time.

The Braudel System and time study in general always resulted in less pay for piece-workers. I wasn't about to waste my life in a job which was continually downgraded. The GE Turbine Test Department seemed a likely place to attack for a job. Oscar Swayne was supervisor at that time. I spent much of my free time dogging his footsteps and being

friendly with his secretary until he agreed to interview me. Swayne attempted to dissuade me: "After all, you will only be handling larger units. The job may not change that much." This argument did him little good and I persisted until I was finally transferred to the Super-charger Department, where I had the privilege of working with Bernard Augustus Libby.

Bernie was a small, wiry and balding Yankee, from Waterville, Maine. He was a 'Jack-of-all-trades' as well as inventive. These Yankees always seem to have a proclivity to invent things and then to use a device until it becomes superfluous. 'Down Maine' what little free time there was when the snow became too deep to work or, for the farmers too deep to do ought else but throw a bit of hay to the cow-beasts, was devoted to 'inventin.' Discussion upon such arcane matters as perpetual motion could be carried on for years and filled the same slot as earlier argument dealing with how many angels could dance on the head of a pin? Or, who will win the next election, or did the local sheriff really knock up his daughter or was it her brother?

Bernie Libby was several cuts above that sort of discussion although not above playing an occasional trick. He had told us quite calmly that he could walk a tight rope. We, of course, thought he was bragging. Upon returning from lunch one day, we heard a voice from on high. Thinking it came from God or the night manager of the plant, we looked up ... There was Bernard Augustus Libby balancing upon a tight cable stretched from one corner of the experimental room to the other.

Bernie was not a kid. He had two grown sons both of whom were pilots: one in the Army and one in the Navy. The wife I met must have been his second, since she was considerably younger than Bernard. She suffered from a peculiar affliction, often falling asleep at strange moments. One evening Bernard and I were discussing a telescope mirror he was grinding. His wife was at the ironing board. Suddenly, Bernie walked over to her, took the iron away from her and led her to a chair. "Don, don't be concerned.

She often does this. I am only afraid that she might injure herself or burn down the house. She is a nurse but can no longer practise. The last time she worked, she fell asleep over the operating table." Libby seemed to accept this situation with a certain ironic humor. There really was nothing he could do.

Libby claimed that he had invented the first photoelectric light meter for photography and I have no reason to doubt his claim. I recall inventing a method of centrifugal casting for some project of mine when I was twelve. Many years later I learned that the same process was used in Switzerland for the casting of Bofors gun barrels. It was not unlike some of the ancient Chinese inventions, such as movable type, useful but not aesthetically pleasing. Petroleum oil made superior lamp-black for writing but might have destroyed an entire craft skill. The oil industry may have been aborted 1000 years ago! (Surely this says a lot about our present society which has no compunction about laying off thousands of workers as the rate of profit falls .... Adopting new processes with no thought of the social consequences and even less of the consequences to the earth we live on, if the consequences affect the profit.

My work with Libby consisted of bits-and-pieces of various small experiments: testing components for the engines, testing strange cameras for photographing Schlerein effects, the reflected opacity of air passing through a turbine. This test was used to redesign the blades for turbines. We took some of the first pictures of corn-popping and duplicated many of the photographs of Edgerton, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later a president of Edgerton, Germesshausen & Greer at Salem, Massachusetts. Everything we did was 'breadboarded.' Nothing was permanent, and our devices often spread out for several feet in the beginning of their designs. As design and redesign progressed, a device would tend to become smaller and composed of fewer parts. We had nothing like a computer with CAD capacities. Everything had to be 'real' and up front.

Several groups were asked to design a blast-gate (a device not unlike a damper for a kitchen stove). The electrical engineers designed a gate that functioned totally electrically. The mechanical engineers made a gate that operated by springs and levers. When Bernie and I got hold of the gadget, we combined the two methods and made the thing work. I believe it was installed in the P-38 aircraft as a part of the Turbo-supercharger. Both superchargers were mounted outboard on the engine booms and resulted in an unfortunate condition for the pilot. When buckets were thrown from the turbine, as frequently happened, either because of enemy fire or poor workmanship, they had the force of 50 caliber bullets and in a few instances flew through the head of the pilot. We designed and built a large, heavy ring machined at an angle, which was fastened to the turbine casing and intended to deflect the flying bucket. This design rarely functioned and was often broken by the force of the bucket that led the pieces of the deflection ring to the head of the pilot.

The Turbo-supercharger was invented by Dr. Sanford A. Moss, a rather curious, small man. Curry Downes and I had lunch with Dr. Moss one day. He carefully wiped his chair before sitting down. Then just as carefully he wiped all of his utensils, wiped the rim of his water glass and finally ordered his lunch. When we had finished eating, the good Dr. Moss picked up the check for the three of us, went to the cashier, took out his money, and paid the bill without any ritual cleaning or washing. Apparently money was clean. Perhaps he washed his money each evening. For all of that, Dr. Moss was a pleasant enough person to work for. The front gate of the GE River Works was of wrought iron and kept closed ... except when Dr. Moss came barrelling down the Company Street headed directly at the gate. The guards would come rushing out of their warm little house and swing open the gate just as Moss's old Ford was about to crash into them. I doubt he ever received a ticket.

Dr. Moss was as valuable a property as Dr. Steinmetz was reputed to be a generation earlier. I certainly cannot

ignore Dr. Steinmetz. We often sat with Gus Salmonson, manager of the division, listening to his tales of the old days when he worked with Steinmetz. It seemed that they had an informal organization named The Friday Evening Society for the Equalization of Salaries, a great weekly poker game at which Steinmetz often won ... perhaps because of the smoke screen from his stinking Parodi cigars, which usually encircled his body.

The contract for the Turbo-supercharger was let out to the Ford Motor Company and completely redesigned as a stamped-out pre-fabricated machine in contrast to the original design, which used a heavy aluminum casting for the impeller casing. Ford sent us a young engineer to work in our building. Probably he was the dirtiest-talking person I ever met. Bernard Libby and I felt that his language was adopted for our benefit as lowly workmen and that he was attempting to be one of the boys.... His name was Iacoca.

At that time there was little of the tight security we now see and which workers tolerate. Although the period (1942/43) was at the height of the war effort, to my knowledge one was never hassled. Of course we wore photo badges and all of us were fingerprinted. I'm sure there must have been some sort of security check since, in my case anyway, we were working at the front of the wave in aircraft engines. Some time during 1941, GE received the prototype of Air Commodore Whittle's aircraft gas turbine engine from England. It was based on Italian and Swiss designs of twenty years earlier and was a strange looking melange of parts. It consisted of several oil-burners connected to a centrifugal compressor by means of very large grey-black tubing we immediately named 'elephant trunks.' The hot gases were then fed through a tailpipe and ejected, thus utilizing the thrust generated. When it became necessary to move the engine from one building to another, we would cover it with a tarpaulin and actually affix a phony aircraft propeller to the front end to disguise the beast as a normal aircraft engine. Of course, a great many changes took place in a very short time. The entire machine was re-designed within months,

tested and shipped to be installed in a new type of aircraft at Muroc, California.

There were often accidents in the testing of components. One evening hearing a scream, I ran out of the instrument laboratory onto the main floor of the building. A trail of bloody droplets led to the rear door. I followed it and came upon one of the men stretched out on the floor and bleeding from many cuts, most of them around his kidney area. A turbine wheel had burst while the tester was in the large, thick walled test cell,

Despite GE's protestations of the purity and excellence of their safety record, little was done to improve safety conditions during the war. Carbon tetrachloride was used by the pailful to clean out the deep, wood-lined pits where turbine wheels were tested. At least once I pulled an unconscious worker from a pit where he was engaged in a cleaning operation. Mercury, which was used in pressure and vacuum measuring instruments, was rarely contained and spilled over the floor, quite callously. Turbine wheels were tested to destruction and twice we had serious injuries when wheels exploded. Phil Welch lost half of one hand in an explosion. At that time at least, the union was a 'sweethart' union and did little to improve conditions. This cavalier attitude, however, was generally ignored by the company and there was much evidence of worker protest. A supervisor named Satan (really) was despised by everyone for his toadying up to the higher management and his outrageous demands upon the workers. One evening, as he was walking down the factory aisle, a very large bolt fell from the rafters and cut open the side of his head. A victim without a perpetrator. But we always took care of our own. It seems that when some persons get drunk, they also become super- responsible to their job and come to work. One such fellow got drunk so frequently it became almost a religious rite to gather him up and hide him among the boxes in the storage area, making the proper excuses for him to the bosses until the shift was over.

Shift work was really cruel: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., 4 p.m. to midnight. There was even a fifth shift, although that may seem impossible, which overlapped between other shifts. I worked all of the shifts at various times. There was little notification. Most of us went around in a sleepy daze and accident rates, as well as on-purpose accidents, continued to rise. We complained constantly but there was no organized resistance, since everything we did was done to 'Win the War.'

One beautiful exception was that of an old Swedish toolmaker. Like workers in the old-days, Sven owned all of his tools and could be seen often pushing a large cart down the floor of the factory. His job was to carefully fit tool elements together to very close tolerances that required the utmost concentration: Marking the tool with Prussian blue, burnishing off microns of material; fitting two pieces together and repeating the operation for a close fit many times. Satan hated Sven, told him, "You better speed it up, old man. Don't you know that there's a war on?" Sven very quietly cleaned up his area ... carefully cleaned, wrapped and put away his precious and unobtainable tools packed his cart and left the plant. His was a lovely example of worker resistance I have not forgotten and which I continue to applaud.

## 14

# Work, Illness, and the Draft

Although Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, was a shock, it was only shock in addition to the war in Europe as far as the East Coast was concerned. The attack was more immediate on the West Coast and led to the internment camps for Japanese citizens and other Japanese. Except for rabid Nazi sympathizers, few Germans were interned, despite the fact that there had been for over fifty years a full-blown Fascist movement through the German-American Bund. Even among the Italians, upholders of Mussolini's regime, few were interned. The foregoing says a great deal about the large size of both the German and the Italian communities in the United States. Sympathy for Germany quickly dissipated after the declaration of war against Germany at the time of WW1. So did any outward support for Germany or Italy continue for long during WW2. Not a little of this change in attitude had to do with the fact that there were so many jobs available for the first time since 1929. I think we would have sold our very souls for a chance at the good life out of which we had been cheated for the previous ten years.

As a Socialist and especially as a Marxist, I shall have very little to say about the commission of the war itself. The period simply bore out the analysis of capitalist development Marxists had held for nearly a century. We were as certain of these stages as if we might have been watching a drama. The war was being fought for a further division of the spoils. Portuguese, Spanish, British imperialism had played itself

out and now was the time for American imperialism to take center stage and become the reigning imperialist power ... conquering the world in the name of a spurious democracy. Holding this view, we were not startled to find events proving us correct but surprised only by the timetable. Among Yankees the old corrupt Europe with its princes, kings and, queens was something escaped by the revolution of 1776, and they wanted no more of the same. Of course, like the British of previous generations, the Yankees were not above profiting from anyone's war and WW2 was no different from previous conflicts. Of course the rich were also not above their second daughter's marrying some two-bit prince with a great lineage, although broke, which might be good for business as well as refresh the vitiated Yankee bloodlines.

During 1942 Sue had not been feeling well. She had a persistent cold and began to raise an occasional small spot of blood. She consulted with her doctor Joe DiClerico and had a chest X-ray. DiClerico must have been an unfeeling bastard, since he stopped us on the street some time after the examination and said: "By the way, your X-ray shows that you have a small cavity in your left lung and you should check in at the Middleton Sanitarium for more tests and an extended residence." For a sensitive Italian woman like Sue, this news was a bombshell. In those days, and it probably hasn't changed much, to be diagnosed as having TB was tantamount to a death sentence. We were in shock.

Sue checked into the sanitarium and remained there for one year. After a month or so patients were moved from the inner rooms to one of the many porch wings. These were not heated during the coldest winters. Food, rest and cold, that was the cure. I visited with her twice a week for a period. Drugs would not be available until after WW2, in any quantity. Heat in the summer without air-conditioning and abysmal cold in winter, a room shared by ten other young women ... none of whom came from wealthy backgrounds. The rich had their own dens where they hid from the world. The hospital was a difficult place to get to: one had to take a

bus from Lynn to Salem and change for a bus to Danvers, then another change to get the Middleton bus which stopped about half a mile from the hospital.

I am sure that Sue's family was devastated by this event. Sue was a hope on the female side. She had graduated from high school with excellent marks and had what was then considered a good job at the GE plant. As no one in her family contracted tuberculosis, I cannot help but believe that she picked up the disease in her work place. Her family had a hard row to hoe. In 1905 Giuseppe 'Joe' Zappacosta had arrived in the US from Abruzzia in Italy. Like thousands of other Italians, he became a part of the shoemaking machinery. Like thousands of other Italians, Joe had a thumb chopped off by a beam-dinker, an antiquated machine for cutting leather parts for shoes. Three years later he had managed to save enough pennies to bring his wife Virginia and her two young children, Anna and Edwardo, across the Atlantic to Boston and then to Lynn where there was a large Italian community. Virginia went to work immediately, finishing vests for men's suits. She was soon pregnant with Hilda and then Joe Jr. After that the family grew with Sue, Gilda and finally Frankie. With such a large family everyone went to work early: Anna and Eddie in the shoe factories, Hilda in the Shoe.

Young Joe also worked in leather factories but he was not considered very bright. One cannot blame the poor man. At the age of fifteen, he had been picked-up by the police for shaking his prick at a girl on the street. In Italy this would not have been considered a crime but rather a source of amusement. There was a vast difference between the Puritan Yankees of Lynn and the bon vivant men of Chietti. Joe was sent away for ninety days' observation at the Danvers Insane Asylum and marked for all time with guilt, guilt, and guilt. His spirit was completely crushed. Soon after Sue and I met, Joe met and married a very powerful woman not too unlike his own mother. The marriage lasted nearly a month because his wife simply wouldn't fuck him, or he couldn't ... or both.

Except to work, to church and to visit with me once in a while, Joe never left home again.

Sue's sister Hilda married Louis Fantone from Peabody, a leather worker. They lived away from home for a time and then returned. Hilda was mentally unstable and spent much time in and out of hospitals having shock therapy. She finally became a totally passive vegetable. Although she was pleasant enough usually, she often became paranoid ... suspicious of everyone and everything.

For several years Eddie worked in shoe factories but he had ambition and studied nights. Eddie had a clubfoot and wore one of those built-up shoes that exhausted him. I remember his almost crawling up the steps of the house when returning exhausted from work. Eddie obtained a job working for the Lynn Optical Company and managed to remain there for the rest of his life. He married a Greek girl named Eleanor and they had one child, Frankie, named for the youngest Zappacosta child who had died in an aircraft crash over San Diego while on a routine naval flight.

Anna was the oldest daughter. She married Leonard Ferrari, a mechanic, and a man guilt-ridden that he was never called up for duty in WW2. As soon as his two daughters, Nancy and Jean, were grown, Lennie joined the Naval Reserve, travelled, and became fat as the pig he was and died in Florida. Born and raised in Lynn and close to me for a time, he seemed as a youngster not to harbor any particular ill thoughts against anyone. One of his friends was a black from West Lynn whom he had known from childhood. A few years later when I met Lennie after he had been in the Navy for about two years, he had turned into a raging anti-Semite and 'nigger hater.' All men learn something from military service.

Gilda was the youngest of the Zappacosta girls. She never went out to work. As she was still quite young when WW2 began, and money was coming into the family from several directions, Gilda had a good deal of freedom. She went out to dances, and often when Sue and I returned home, Gilda would be entwined with some young man outside

the back door of their house on Chestnut Street. Gilda was quite small and her first husband, Harold Grant, was shorter than Gilda. They had one daughter, Norma. Harold was a mean little bugger when he drank, which was often. When he was out of work, which was often, he would return home and punch out Gilda. After a few years and with one small child, Gilda had had enough and Harold was jailed for a short time. The odd thing was that as soon as he was let out of jail, he went to work steadily and managed to keep up his support payments to Gilda and Norma. Sometime after WW2 Gilda married Gerald Moulton, a returned veteran. They had a son and Gerry did everything he possibly could to keep his boy from going to Korea. It did no good and the young man was called up ... off to Korea where he was wounded slightly and returned home.

None of these in-laws were bad persons. They were simply workers locked into a system which they supported as slaves will support a master not really cruel enough to personally destroy them but cruel enough to maintain a slight pressure throughout their lives. A cruelty so slight it is mistaken for benignity. A pressure so persistent that it becomes unrecognizable and for the most part unfelt. The reality of this life is hemorrhoids, piles, tuberculosis, and diabetes. The reality of the life is a tension constant from birth. Deep within one a feeling of worthlessness masked by a surface feeling of value fed to one by one's 'bettters.' If it were not for this surface feeling, the feeling of which one may 'rise and succeed,' the revolution would indeed become permanent and ongoing. "We are what we are and this is ordained by Providence." "The rich are rich because they have an innate nobility of character."

"Putting down roots." "Remaining in the old home town." Stability and immobility are all a part of attitudes working to reinforce the concept of competitive capitalism. I truly believe that nomadism is the true destiny of mankind. Not that one is in constant movement from place to place but that one maintains the attitude of freedom to move ... and often does so. Historically, nomadic tribes were not

constantly on the move. They moved with the seasons and with the availability of food, very often returning at some distant period to the places they had left. It is not inconceivable to me that, as manufacturing technology deepens in improvement, nearly all production may be accomplished with little human intervention.

In quite measurable terms, unemployment is increasing and the span of employable years is decreasing. At the beginning of the century the employable span began at eight years of age and continued until death with a life expectancy of around sixty years. One had fifty-two possible working years. Today in North America children rarely are forced into the employment marketplace before the age of eighteen. With a life expectancy of seventy-one years, one might suppose that a working life would still be fifty-two years. The fact is that enforced retirement at the age of sixty-five reduces the employment span to forty-seven years, IF ONE CAN WORK AT A SINGLE JOB for the entire span. This is rarely possible but is surely at the base of many of the evils of the employment system itself.

With Sue in the Essex Sanitarium, I continued to live at the West Baltimore Street apartment and work at General Electric. I was living alone, taking some of my meals either with my in-laws or at my grandmother's house, and working a miserable split shift which saw me half asleep much of the time. I joined the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Reserve to have something to do a few nights a week. We spent our time walking the beaches and cliffs of Nahant, the small-islanded peninsula sticking out from Lynn into Massachusetts Bay. We were protecting the rich from German U-boat invasion. U-boat or not, I recall arriving home from work one morning and hearing the thud of depth charges. I hurried to Lynn Beach where I espied a destroyer out beyond Egg Rock, dashing back and forth making lots of noise and attracting a large crowd of early risers. Perhaps it was only a display to encourage our production rates in the General Electric. If we were not doing guard duty, we were in the Coast Guard Station at Nahant, drinking coffee and playing 'shit pool.'

Lynn was a busy town during those days. With most of the young men off to war since 1940, the number of young women available was phenomenal. Many came from the outlying cities or even from the Deep South to work in the local defense industry. One evening I met a lovely young woman, Anne, coming from her apartment in the next building. I invited her up for a drink and one thing led to another. This went on for several weeks. In addition, there were also two or three other women, mainly girl friends from the neighborhood. I think one should remember that, prior to my marriage, although there had been many episodes of frustrated love-making, I had still been unscrewed except by my own hand. I had become awakened, as it were, to the delights of sex during that one short year of marriage and was not about to give it up. I became reacquainted with Phyllis, a librarian whom I had known for several years; nothing serious ... simply a pleasant person to be with and to talk about books rather than warfare, which was the usual topic of concern.

One woman in particular I recall was Lillian. She had been a school chum of mine at West Baltimore Street School and later at Brickett School. Lillian can only be described as a soft, blond, plump Jewish girl. One evening I was at Hebbard's Drug Store on the corner of Broad and Newhall streets when I ran into Lillian. She was wearing a big raccoon coat and leading a very large German Shepherd dog. We got to chatting and it turned out that she lived in the apartment house just behind mine. Of course we walked homeward together and I invited her up. I asked if she wanted to remove her coat. She said, "No," and then opened her coat. She was completely nude! As usual, one thing led to another and we were both hot to trot. She warned me not to bruise her, as her mother frequently examined her to see that she had not been soiling her precious body with local boys. As we began our labors, her dog got heated up and began pumping my leg. Now this dog weighed in at around eighty pounds, quite a weight to add to Lillian's 120 lbs. I got the giggles and could not proceed, so I locked the dog in

the bathroom where he proceeded to tear the room apart amid loud howling and grumbling. So much for that incident of love's labor lost. As it turned out, Lillian was getting married a few days hence and wished one last fling before she settled down with a local dentist-in-training. For all I know, ours might have been her first experience and she only wished to prove her independence.

These sorts of adventures continued until I was drafted and left for the army, November of 1943. I expect that all of the bars were down during the war period and never were again erected. How could they have been? Hard on the heels of the war with Germany came the war with Japan. Only a few years later came Korea to be followed by Vietnam and lately by Iraq and Afghanistan. Include the many little wars throughout the world, to say nothing of the Cuban revolution and all of the struggles for freedom from colonial domination in Africa and elsewhere which would now become freedom from an American colonialism and its wanna-bes.

At General Electric during that period I had only one reasonably firm friend and he disappeared several months previous to my being drafted into the Army of the United States (AUS).

His name was Goddard Cheney Parsons, who was working with us although he was a Conscientious Objector (CO). I believe few persons in the shop knew of his status. At the peak of WW2, I'm sure he would have suffered. Goddard was a friendly person and came from a Boston Quaker or Unitarian family of considerable note. I was proud to know him and pleased that he would take me into his confidence.

Before Sue became ill, Sue and I were invited to his home to meet his mother and sister at dinner one evening. Where Goddard lived was the famous Hidden House on Beacon Hill approached via a long, brick alleyway at the end of which appeared to be nothing more than a blank wall. Not until we gained the end of this tunnel did we see, on our immediate right, an alcove with a pre-Revolutionary

doorway. We rang the bell and were admitted by Goddard to the second floor. The house was situated steeply on Beacon Hill, with the first floor below us and the third floor above. Goddard's mother and sister were present. I do not recall meeting his father. Despite the very small portions, dinner was adequate. Why mention the menu? Sue and I came from working class families, Sue from an Italian immigrant family and I from a New England bunch. For us dinner consisted of much more than a small portion of peas, potato and, a tiny cutlet. All very tasty but hardly enough to sustain working persons. The reality, of course, was untrue. There is a deep-seated fear that the worker's meal may be the last and therefore best make it huge, when possible. Despite the rhetoric of teachers, government, preachers and those with most to gain, hope may spring unbidden into the worker's breast but he/she does not trust the fine speeches.

Well, Goddard disappeared. In November, 1943, I was drafted into the Army of the United States to begin a whole new life. I assume Goddard as a Conscientious Objector may have been placed in one of the 'concentration camps' set up by the US as well as by Canada. Or he may have gone into the Medical Corps as an Aid man. All relationships during WW2 and after were made and broken very rapidly. Leaving Lynn in November with a draft of men for Fort Devens at Ayer, Massachusetts, was hardly a pleasant experience. But then, we were heroes going off to fight another war against the Hun, now called a Nazi.

As a socialist I took a position agreed to by all of us in the SWP at that time. We would not rush out and join up, but if drafted we would go and share the experience with the young men and women of our generation. We would attempt to be the best soldiers as we had attempted to be the best and most militant of union members in the shop. Looking back, of course, ours was a rather naïve view. Certainly our feelings about WW2 were very much mixed. We felt it was another capitalist war to further divide up the world and the profits. At the same time millions of Socialists, Jews, Gypsies and radicals of all stripes were being

slaughtered in German concentration camps. The young men of Germany and other countries were being impressed into service to die. Of course, the vast majority were working class kids and our comrades. We would go into the service and attempt to be the best soldiers possible in the eyes of our comrades and attempt to do as little damage as possible. We would also bend every effort to present our view of the world and of the war.

# 15

## The Draftee

November of 1943 and I was drafted into the Army of the United States and shipped off to Fort Devens at Ayer, perhaps the coldest, dreariest location in Massachusetts.

Fort Devens had been established prior to WW1 and hadn't changed very much. Add to its age the pressures of WW2 logistics and Devens was a mess of overage, drafty, badly maintained shacks. It was winter. Ayer, Massachusetts, is perhaps the coldest spot in New England. It is also one of the windiest and wind-chill factors have been known to push the temperature to minus forty degrees F. We had been rushed through the swearing-in ceremony at Boston and had sworn to defend our country against all enemies (I do not recall if the word "domestic" was added then ... against all enemies both foreign and domestic.) We were punched and probed from asshole to teeth. Rushed through a series of eyesight and coordination tests and shipped off to Devens by train.

Imagine a group of city boys hardly dressed for Arctic weather, slouching around on a train platform, attempting to stand against an eighty mile per hour wind; the genuine face of misery. After being marched in a ragged line to our shacks, we were fed a mess of slops and marched to the Quartermaster warehouse to be outfitted: "What size shoe?" "9 1/2 ..." "Take these 10s and grow into them." Dressed we entered as bemused civilians, and bare-assed we came out, to be driven into another cold and drafty warehouse where we showered, were cursorily debugged (those 'at had 'em,) and

and succeeded in dressing against the wind in clothing that appeared to have been constructed of heavy cardboard some time during WW1 and kept stored in moth flakes against just such a day as they would be again required. We were issued our bedding: one thin mattress, one blanket, one pillow (thin) and one fart sack. The fart sack was supposed to be used as a cover for the mattress, but by long association with ingenious soldiers, probably as far back as the Civil War, had been transformed into the top and bottom sheet. The sack within which one slept and farted.

My contingent remained at the old fort for a week or so while we were being processed and turned into prime GIs. Several years prior to Fort Devens, I had been involved in a strike of news reporters at the *Lynn Daily Evening Item*. While waiting in line to be processed and shipped to the infantry, I was surprised to hear my name called: "Private Morrill, report to desk #7." Although I couldn't imagine why (all soldiers figure they screw-up if they stand out at all), I proceeded smartly to desk #7 to find Herb Schon, once a reporter for the *Item* and now a sergeant interviewer. Herb silently admonished me not to recognize him and I sat down. "We just received a notice that twenty-five men are required to volunteer for the Air Force Cadet School. Are you available, or do you have your heart set upon going into the infantry?" I was more than available ... I was anxious. Who in his right mind would want to be sleeping in mud, perhaps for years! I volunteered. Took all of the necessary tests, coming through with an intelligence rating of 150, which was enough for the army to be suspicious of me ... after all 112 was the rating necessary for officers' school! Three days later I was on a train and off to Greensboro, North Carolina, as a Volunteer Flight Trainee, slated to be a Bombardier.

Prior to WW2 little attention was paid to 'Psychological Profiling.' Human meat was necessary to the commission of a war: two arms, two legs and a trigger finger. It is interesting to note here that the psychologist/marketeers have taken over. It is simply assumed and devoutly believed that war has become so high-tech that casualties are minimal

and therefore a higher type of recruit is required. Typing training allows the use of ALL fingers for button pushing.

Basic Training Center #10 (BTC#10) Greensboro, North Carolina. Cold, wet and miserable. Filled with idiots like myself all set to become flight-crew members and sink the Japanese. The first of the morning chores was to sluice down the long barrack's floor. Since a single coal-fired stove at one end heated the barracks, the other end was in an Arctic shadow. Grabbing a bucket of water kept near the stove at night to prevent it from freezing, we would throw the warmish water the length of the floor. The water froze into a skating rink less than ten feet from the stove. After three weeks I went into hospital with pneumonia ... right after passing with flying colors all of the psychomotor tests and map reading. While the tests were crude and living conditions abysmal, the hospital was quite comfortable. I was willing to remain as a permanent guest but the command saw my recurring illness in another light.

Although I had washed-out of cadet school because of pneumonia, fate had other plans for me and I was soon set to teaching from several of the army training manuals probably because I was one of the few men able to read English with some fluency: *Building the Field Latrine. Care and Operation of the Field Lister Bag for drinking (?) water. Familiarization and Field stripping Small Arms Blindfolded. How to Protect Yourself in a Mustard Gas Attack*, published 1918. (Of course we were given strict orders not to mention this manual, since Good American Boys certainly wouldn't use gas.) All great stuff about which I knew absolutely nothing. I would withdraw the manuals each afternoon and memorize the high points before presenting the information to even newer recruits than myself. War was not so highly organized in them good old days ... one was in a do-it-yourself army or didn't do it at all.

Among the many men I met at BTC#10, only one stands out. Samuel Edward Anthony Paul Tickle ... really! Paul informed me that he had done a stint as a lay monk in California, hence the elongated name. He had also played

the organ at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood. This last I had trouble believing until returning very early to camp one morning, we dropped into the base chapel. Being half bombed, we paid little attention to the locks on the door. Paul sat at the organ and began to play J. S. Bach. The music continued for some time until a cough behind us alerted us to the presence of the base chaplain. "Boys, it's a lovely concert for 0200, but the main switch is on and you are entertaining over 2000 soldiers, to say nothing of a full complement of ranking officers. Go to bed." We unsteadily went off to our barracks and surprisingly heard no more about the escapade.

Aside from the war other events occupied our time. One of the recruits was caught stealing from his barracks mates and was taken out 'behind the barn' and beaten ... no more stealing. One of the drill sergeants, a miserable bastard named Barefoot, an Indian from Oklahoma, a twenty-five year veteran with ketchup for brains, came to barracks one night and in a drunken rage struck two of the privates and fell asleep on his bunk. We strapped him in and then carried Barefoot and bed outside ... all the way to the center of the Parade, which was just outside the chapel. Next morning, as the officers made their way to church, they had to pass by Sgt. Barefoot, bare-assed, blearily awake and still strapped to his bed and unable to extricate himself. After being loosed by the military police and taken off, Barefoot was never seen again.

Well, I washed out of pre-Cadet training but I remained in the air force, and that was a plus. Soon a trainload of troops was gathered up from all of us terrified civilians, and we were shipped off to ... where?

As usual, we had no idea of our destination. Rumor had it that we would go anywhere from Alaska to South America. South America? Why, there was no war going on there. Hey, no question about it, we were going to Florida and shipping out to Europe. Instead ... we went only to Daniel Field, Augusta, Georgia ... hardly down the road from Greensboro, North Carolina.

Daniel Field: sometimes known as the hellhole of the world. A small city with separate but hardly equal facilities for both blacks and whites. Indians, Italians, Mexicans, depending upon the shade of skin, were relegated to black or white. Curly hair, lip contour, flat feet like Steppin' Fetchit, the movie *Black*, were considered incontrovertible evidence of black blood. So much for science in Georgia in 1944.

Two weeks at Daniel Field taking Basic Training for the second time, and I came down with pneumonia again. I also had word that Sue had had a lung collapsed. This news added to my own collapse. After twelve days in hospital, I hid out beneath the stage in the auditorium. Finally I emerged and reported to medical as AWOL (Away Without Leave) after three days of hunger and candy bars ... also boredom with listening from my cave to repeated lectures on venereal diseases delivered by idiots. Upon my return to the 'real' world, I was sent to the base psychiatrist. He immediately diagnosed me as homosexual. When this did not elicit immediate outrage, he was positive of his diagnosis. After explaining that my wife was very ill, he backed off and suggested I see the Red Cross for Compassionate Leave. Two days later I was on my way back to Lynn, Massachusetts, with a three-week pass. I mistakenly left the bus near Orange— about as far from Lynn as one could possibly be and still be within the state. It took me nearly eight hours of hitch-hiking in the rain before I got to South Lynnfield and caught a local bus to Middleton. My meeting with Sue, after several months' separation, worked out OK. The lung collapse (pneumo-thorax) had given her much needed rest and she expected to be discharged within six months. Also, the European drug PAS had become available and she was on a course of this miracle, which had been refused entry to the US for the previous ten years.

After two weeks at home, I returned to Daniel Field, where I promptly got into trouble on one of the local buses. One of my acquaintances on the base was a very large black man named James Morgan. He was from the British West Indies and quite an educated person. Blacks were mostly in

construction battalions at that time and Morgan hated the stupid foot-slogging work. I asked him to go into town with me ... have a few beers, dinner, and walk about. He refused: "They treat us like shit in these southern towns. We can't walk in their shadows for fear of getting lynched, and you and I can't occupy the same seats on the buses."

The next day I got a pass and went into town by Base bus. After having a few cold beers, I decided to take the city bus. Getting on, I went to the back where it just happened there was the only empty seat. "Hey, you, white boy, them seats is for the coloreds. You come on down heah," yelled the driver. I wasn't going to let any peapickin' country boy tell me where I could sit and I yelled back, "Ah'm cullid." This went back and forth for a little while until the driver called in two Military Police who happened to be outside. As luck would have it, one of the MPs was from New England. I explained to him that I was from Boston, and I was a negro and sitting in the proper place down south. Although he didn't believe me at all, he turned to the driver and said, "Well, he says he's a negro and we don't have any identification in this army for negroes or whites so I guess he must be black." I tell you that was one pissed off red-neck. He took off so fast the MPs couldn't get off the bus in time and had to travel to the next stop while arguing with the driver. I told Morgan the story and we had a good chuckle over it, but he did warn me not get on that bus again and to sit in the white seats for fear I would get the shit kicked out of me. This was by no means the only incident in race relations during that period. Several small riots occurred between whites and colored soldiers, as between white townspeople and coloreds.

Back at Daniel Field I found that my orders had been cut and I was to ship out with a contingent of my equals for an unannounced destination. More rumors and a very long train ride through the south to New Orleans where we were given an eight-hour pass to see the city. This visit to one of the more fascinating cities in North America resulted in two visits to local saloons and a quick run back to the troop train.

We were not to remain in New Orleans but to continue ... West! Knowing the way the military worked, we were sure there would soon be a turn northwards and we might sail for the Aleutian Islands.

How surprised I was to awaken a day later and find the sun rising over a Spanish village ... adobe, dogs, children, sombreros and people going about their business all bathed in golden light. We slowly moved through the village and I fell back to sleep. Only later did I realize my view of a paradise was not a dream but that I had been introduced to the Southwest ... no introduction could have been better. Mexicans were not strange to me. Back in Lynn I had had a Mexican friend, Carlos Navarro. Certainly I had known many dark-skinned persons. Perhaps it was the setting. Awakening early in the morning on a troop train with not an inkling of where I had been travelling through the night to an unknown destination with little possibility of a return.

At least now we had a good idea of where we were heading... also the troop sergeant finally informed us that our destination was "somewhere in California." That 'somewhere' turned out to be San Bernardino. We were placed into something named "2nd Air Cargo Command Squadron." Which meant absolutely nothing to us. Two mornings later we were in an indoctrination course crawling under barbed wire through garbage-filled ditches and attempting to keep our butts well below the surface. Why? We didn't get into the United States Air Force for this crap. We expected the Air Corps song: "Off we go, into the Wide Blue Yonder" ... not crawling on our belly through mud and shit. Where the hell were the aircraft? Where were the beautiful USO women sent to entertain us heroes? After we had been through this version of hell-week for four days, we were lined up in front of our shacks:

"I am Major blah blah. I represent the Adjutant General's Office. If you have any complaints, talk to me. Why are you here? Most of you have I.Q.s high enough to be sent directly to college."

Of course, as the oldest man there (twenty-three) I had to open my big mouth: "Sir, this man Private Spalding was relieved at the convenience of government from Signal Officers' School because no more SOs were needed. That man over there is a skilled machinist. I am a jet-engine specialist. At our last base, Daniel Field, the CO told us that no man would remain at HIS base longer than seven days before being shipped out. Here we are."

Saith the Major God, "We'll see about that. You are hereby relieved of duty until I call Daniel Field and we get this straightened out."

We were not only relieved of duty but given open passes to prowl San Berdoo .... That we did. After four days each of us received new orders. I was to go on my own to Sacramento Army Air Base (SAAB). For some reason, probably due to Herb Schon, I was expected to become a labor-contract negotiator ... because of my union organizing activities a few years earlier. Not to be. Not to be. When I arrived at SAAB, McClellan Field, new orders were cut and I found myself going to Aircraft Instrument Mechanics School. What the hell ... why not?

San Bernardino Army Air Base: my plywood hut. Another plywood hut. We lived in small plywood shacks: six men to a shack. Several rows of shacks in an isolated part of the base. We knew we had been assigned to something called the "2nd Air Cargo Control Squadron."

Our second morning we were called out and marched to a large field about a mile from our shacks. There we were formed into groups of four and instructed to "Follow the yellow tapes wherever they lead. Do not, repeat, do not follow the red tapes under any circumstances. Move out." We moved out. We followed the yellow tapes through a small minefield set with squibs arranged to be exploded by some idiot at a keyboard somewhere hidden from us. We followed the tapes to a high fence barrier ... and over the barrier to be dumped into a garbage pit of mud and obscenity (the obscenity coming from several clean non-coms standing by the side of the ditch). We followed the yellow tapes and

under the yellow tapes as 30 caliber machine gun bullets whistled over our heads. Over a rope catwalk suspended above a filthy stream and through a defile to come out upon another field with a suspicious gray shack in the distance. We followed the yellow tapes to a collection of gas masks. We were instructed to put the masks over our faces and "pull those fucking straps tight if you want to live." Inside the gray shack in groups of four (four men who had become our bosom buddies within the past hour). The doors were closed and resoundingly LOCKED from the outside. All silence. Dead silence. A slight pop and the smoky gas spread in a thick yellow puddle upon the floor. Thickening and rising up to our knees, chests, and faces. Five minutes of eternity we stood, bathed in the gas until "Take off the fucking masks!" We did. The gas caught at our noses and throats. Entered our lungs. The doors burst open and running, retching and some men vomiting, we flung ourselves into the tall grass of the field. This exercise from day to day was repeated with a variety of irritating agents including a dilute mustard gas. We noted one, two, five, seven men missing from our company from day one to day five.

We were taken to a shooting range and all qualified with .30 calibre carbines. Those of us with higher scores were handed the .45 automatic and qualified. Then given the Thompson sub-machine gun. I qualified with all of the weapons and came out with a high score and a whole series of 'shingles' on my qualifying badge which attested to the fact that I had achieved the exalted state of sharpshooter and could kill a man at 100 yards. Far enough away to hit him in the chest and blow his lungs out without really seeing him ... Sanitized elimination, which I was to learn more about as time passed.

Three day pass. Off by bus to San Berdoo. Stop at the nearest bar and fill up with beer. Meet several WACs (Women's Army Corps) and make an appointment for later in the evening. Drop the WACs and pick up another young woman. Home with her to OXBOW RD. Her name? I do not

recall ... she wore a red coat. Her face? I do not recall. She had a small house and warned me as we entered that we shouldn't make too much noise. She didn't wish to awake her two year old daughter. We did our business on the divan in the crowded living-room after I assured her I had a Merry Widow safely clothing my dink. Soon after I found myself on a dirt road stumbling through the orange groves. Dogs barking all around me. Lights going on in houses and shouts from irate farmers. A bright light in the distance. The beacon from the base. I followed the ever-shining light of glory until I was challenged by a guard as I stumbled along a barbed wire fence. He, after examining my pass, showed me the direction of the guard post and we parted in reasonable friendship. And so to bed at 03:00. To be up and somewhat awake at 05:30. We were by God "going to be whipped into a combat group or by God you sons-of-bitches won't return alive." Over the next five days or so we were marched, brow-beaten, short-sheeted with live tear gas grenades. Called out at 02:00 and marched some more.

Then, a very strange occurrence. We were NOT called out. We were not brow-beaten. We lay about in our shacks wondering when the next attack of our superiors would occur. "Attenshun. At Ease." A major (just about the highest ranking officer we had seen at SBAB) came through the door followed by an aide carrying the usual briefcase filled to overflowing with paper. Since I happened to be near the door, I was asked my name, my rank, and my serial number: "Morrill, Donald H., Private. 31426188, Sir."

Shuffling of papers. Quiet fart here and there. "Private Morrill, it indicates here that you have an IQ of 150, why are you here?" Certainly I thought this was a stupid question to ask of the lowest of the low, but just as certainly I did not voice my thoughts. "I was shipped here with the other men from Daniel Field, Georgia, seventeen days ago. The commanding officer of the field made it known that he would have every man shipped out within fourteen days of their arrival at Daniel Field. The man on my left is a skilled mechanic. The man just beyond was released at the

convenience of the army when the Signal Corps Officers' School had an overload of candidates. We were simply moved here." My statement caused a minor explosion from the Major. Although we were unaware of it, the Major came from the Adjutant General's Office and was investigating all units for efficiency. "Well, we will see just how long you men will remain here. I promise you will be shipped to an area where your skills will be more useful."

Within forty-eight hours we were broken up as a squadron and I was shipped to Sacramento Army Air Base as a student aircraft instrument technician where I remained for sixteen weeks. Sacramento Air Base was hardly difficult duty. After I was assigned to my quarters (a four men shack amidst twenty others), I proceeded to the mess hall. In my earlier experiences army food was threatened by inept cooks before being thrown into the fire and cremated ... sadly not the cooks, but the food. Our new mess hall was a veritable paradise presided over by none other than Major William Shakespeare. May I perish if I lie! Shakespeare was a man with a withered left arm, sustained several years previously when he pulled the pin on a grenade but loved it so much he refrained from throwing it away. The major was also the best of the many officers pulling the onerous duty of mess officer ... that temporary duty like night Commanding Officer (CO) or Squadron Chargé d'Affaire of latrines, garbage dumps and duty rosters.

The menu of our first night: fresh bay oysters dipped in batter and roasted (not fried) to a golden color. Peeled roasted potatoes. An excellent mixture of peas and carrots. Freshly baked garlic bread. Pounds of butter and gallons of milk. All the tea (unusual in itself), coffee with real cream. Choice of apple or apricot pie with ice cream or cheddar cheese.

The many breakfasts, lunches and dinners to follow maintained the same high standard of art. Fortunately, I was to be shipped out after sixteen weeks, else I would have remained enslaved to Major Shakespeare's Army forever.

The officers and old fart enlisted men kept Sac Base as close to a pre-war base as possible. It was also a principal base for transshipment of aircraft north to the Aleutians as well as south and west to the Pacific war zone. There was a continual movement of aircraft flown by highly paid and highly coddled civilian pilots, including a few women pilots such as, Jacqueline Cochrane, whom I had watched stunt flying over the Boston Airport during the triumphal welcome for Charles Augustus Lindberg in 1927.

It was at Sac Base that I met Douglas R. Gordon as well as Howard Lowe. Doug was an actor born in Seattle, Douglas Richard Gordon has remained a dear friend, as has his partner Rose Mary Mecham Gordon and Howard Lowe an artist from New York, a Chinese-American and son of an Episcopalian minister. The three of us became inseparable and consumed many a gallon of Chablis and Chinese food in the local restaurants. One incident I recall: We had eaten well and bought a gallon of wine. Wandering out along the highway, we came to North Sacramento and flopped down in the long grass behind a billboard ... sitting cross-legged, we completed our sacrament with the wine. When we attempted to rise, we found our legs would not straighten out and we could neither rise nor walk. We fell over on our sides and remained, giggling and happy, for several hours. We returned to the base by a pathway known only to ourselves ... and to probably everyone else on the base, since the path was beaten deeply into the ground and MacMillan Field had been in existence for many decades.

I suppose it was our youth ... the times. It appeared there were thousands of women available and just as excited as ourselves to be free of adult displeasure. We were brought together in Southern California from every state in the union. Many women came to work at the various defense plants and military installations in North Sacramento. Other young women seemed to have no visible means of support. Still others were local girls caught up in the excitement of the USO (United Service Organizations) and the opportunity of respectfully meeting young men from far away. June came

from Pennsylvania, had two children and was married, but her husband was a miner back in Pennsylvania. June worked at the SAAB. Maggi was night telephone supervisor and had plenty of free time. Rosalie Sue Ascher was a lawyer, a USO Hostess and a pleasant person to be with. Many years later I read her name in the newspapers as "One of the many legal experts defending the Black Dahlia Killer." I knew she would go on to great success! It seems strange to list these women and ignore civilian men, but there were so few men around out of uniform, I hardly noticed them.

When our sixteen-week instrument course was completed, we were to be shipped off to Fresno Replacement Depot to await orders to travel to the South Pacific. Having heard all the horror tales of battle in the Pacific, we were not anxious to go. I had some bright memories:

We were impressed by the royal palms in front of the hotel in Sacramento, was it San Bernardino? Impressed with the orange grove at Redlands ... at that time we met very few persons who had actually been born in the state of California. Most had come from Oklahoma and the other mid-states during the depression of the 1930s, or they were simply too young to talk, or had already been shipped to the south Pacific to die.

Walter Bailey Schilling and I hitch-hiked to San Francisco and found it good. We were picked up by a woman in an enormous Cadillac touring car. During the drive she casually mentioned that her sister ran a whorehouse in New Orleans, but she herself didn't care for that kind of business and opened a hairdressing salon in Vallejo, where she had made enough money to buy her parents a restaurant and was on her way to present them with the keys. It was the casual business about the whorehouse which got to us, and we laughed about it with dumb amazement all the way across the Bay.

Walter and I became separated in San Francisco, and I wandered all over the town, finally climbing Telegraph Hill where I met Vera Verigen a Dukhobor girl from "Up on the Russian River." We ate together. Slept together. Parted, and

I never saw her again, I'm sorry to say. She did write me a note that must have followed me around the world through several camps: "Dear Don, you expect too much ... Not that you expect too much but that you expect too much of me." So much for those expectations. Vera was a good person and no doubt served as an excellent introduction to a people I have grown to admire ... at least some of their history, their actions, and their tremendous courage in Russia, Canada, and the US in the face of their holier' Christian enemies.

Schilling and I came together again, oddly enough, climbing Telegraph Hill a second time. On our way down the hill, we were picked up by a pleasant man and his wife, who took us to their apartment, which was halfway down the hill. Mr. & Mrs. Ghirradelli (the chocolate people) invited us in for a snack and a drink. They had recently had the house built and were renting out a part of it. Their own apartment was at the top of the building and we were very impressed to see the view of the Bay Bridge through the largest glass window on earth. (So it appeared to our wondering eyes.) From what we saw of Ghirradelli Place on our last visit to San Francisco, the family must own a fair amount of the city. After having a feed at Bimbo's Restaurant, we hitched a ride back to Fresno on an open truck. It is stretching the truth to state, "One cannot freeze to death in Southern California." It took us two days to thaw out.

On another occasion I visited the Stage Door Canteen, Hollywood, that most famous of GI Meccas on the coast. Very crowded and very smoky. I met several actors as well as actresses including Angela Lansbury, a young woman. At the Canteen I was invited to a party out in Laurel Canyon, where I met James Wong Howe, cameraman, and many other persons. Odd how we seemed to have come together. Only many years later did I learn that the crowd was a bunch of 'Red and Parlor Pinks.' Without prior identification I had no way of knowing their politics, probably because any discussion we had was a reflection of my own ideology at that time.

One evening as I was walking in the park near the San Bernardino State Capital, a well-dressed man in his fifties approached me. He asked if I would like to have dinner with him since he "was a stranger in a strange town." As a poor GI, I wasn't about to turn down a free meal. It was my first experience with an abalone steak. I am afraid I was not suitably impressed. However, a meal is a meal. After dining, we smoked a good cigar. The man said that he designed vending machines and did they interest me? Of course, having my opinion sought made me feel quite important. I told him that I felt that cigarette machines would really take off after the war. He then asked if I would like to come up to his room for a drink. At this point the alarm bells began to ring and I begged off with the excuse that I had to get back to the Base. I had had enough contact with homosexuals back in Lynn and had no interest in their habits.

# 16

## Shipping out

After Sac Base, Fresno was hell. Searingly hot and dry, with great clouds of dust raised by the feet of thousands of GIs moving on and off the base. Fresno was a Replacement Depot ('Reppo-depo') where new squadrons were made up and shipped to other locations to await further shipment to various theatres of war. Two weeks after my arrival, Doug Gordon sent me a telegram: "Managed to arrange transfer to Fresno. Clerk on account of bad eyesight." Something of that sort. It seems Doug was slated for the infantry but a physical examination got him out of it. Well, it was pleasant to have his smiling (!) face around and we managed a few high jinks while I was waiting to be 'formed up' into a new squadron and sent off to Camp Anza, the pre-embarkation point.

Fresno 'Reppo-depo' was surrounded by a high wire fence, which did not prevent me from holding a conversation with a child standing outside on the dusty dirt road. She told me she was looking for a "gigantic dragoon fly." First time I heard a dragon fly renamed. A few days later I had a very painful wisdom tooth. The base dentist pulled it and gave me some sort of drug to kill the pain, he guaranteed. That evening Douglas, Howard, and I were eating in a Chinese restaurant in Fresno after climbing the camp fence (the usual way of escaping the camp without a pass) when the dentist stopped at our table and inquired about my pain. "No pain, thank you." Youth is often immune to pain which is probably why they are chosen to die on battlefields.

Camp Anza was near Riverside, California ... a sleepy little town. Today my road map informs me that Riverside is a city of over 200,000 persons. Camp Anza appears to be no more.

A soldier's life consists of great chunks of boredom and short, exciting episodes. Beyond what I have written, I have no memory at all of either Riverside or Camp Anza. We were caught up in the excitement and confusion of forming up the 120th Air Service Squadron and leaving in trucks for Wilmington, Port of Los Angeles, where thousands of us stood about awaiting further orders .... Always a soldier's life: "Awaiting further orders."

For us Wilmington was a great dark warehouse smelling of jute, dust and the sea, and a great ship at the dock with a wide open maw awaiting our embarkation. (Twenty-five years later, I was to meet Isao Sanami at the very same spot. Much more about OUR adventures, later) Many of the troop ships were named for generals. I believe our ship was either the *General Bradley* or the *General Mitchell*.

The ship held 8000 of us poor dogfaces, a full complement of crew, plus nurses, Red Cross personnel and officers. The commander of the troops was the brother of Adolph Menjou, the American actor. I do not know his politics, but if they reflected his brother's they were not unlike that of the other Adolf.

"Line up and count off: 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4. The first thirty-two men will eat first mess." (What the hell was a mess?) "In groups of thirty-two, the remaining men will descend to the mess deck." (What the hell was a mess deck?) "Until all the men are victualled. Anyone arriving after 1.5 hours will not eat." One hoped and prayed that he meant the squadron and not 8000 GIs. Even then it seemed unlikely that a squadron of 400 men could be fed in 1.5 hrs! We did not realize we were being slopped like hogs.

In our time-honored way we grumbled ... at the army ... the ship ... the bunks ... the food ... the weather and all additional points over which we had no control whatsoever. Amazing that 8000 men could be so easily pushed about by

fewer than 500 officers. My clearest memory is of the long trough stretching from one end of the head (toilet) to the other through which on a gentle current flowed turds and vomit. Hardly appetizing but one can get used to anything in the good cause of obliterating the Japanese. I did not become ill although there were times I dearly wished I could rid myself of the navy food, which consisted of white bread, watery mashed potatoes and something the sailors called 'horse-cock,' but which to me was only baloney preserved, presumably, with nitrates to quell any rising passions among us.

There were always 'details,' those punishments invented by officers to keep men busy and out of mischief in order to allow officers to be mischievous with the nurses. It never really works: polishing, scrubbing decks, doing kitchen duty, and walking guard post (at sea in the dark?). Chipping paint was the best duty for several reasons: firstly, we could develop 'pig-sties' and be forced to go to Sick Call where we would be brushed against by real, female nurses; secondly, perhaps because of innate rhythm when set to chipping paint, the clank, clank, thunk of chisels always seemed to fall into a definite cadence and appeared especially irritating to the officers when twenty or so chisels were chipping in harmony. At this point an order would come down from the bridge. "Now hear this ... Now hear this ... Chipping must not be accomplished in cadence. It could be detected by enemy submarines." We didn't need to be warned twice. And yet a few minutes later our chipping hammers fell again into cadence. The ship was so large that an order sent over the forward intercom could not be heard at the stern, and the stern chisels continued until another stop order was issued. Dead silence followed by random and secret tappings here and there throughout the ship until finally the concert would once again be heard until the next order. What could be done? What additional punishment could be devised? The brig? 1000 men in a room hardly large enough for three prisoners? Keel-hauling and thumbscrews being considered uncivilized, there was little the officers

could do ... except to remember the insults to authority and devise future punishments out of spite.

Shipboard life was certainly boring. Although I never learned the route, it seems safe to guess that we travelled down the coast of South America before we turned west-southwest and headed for the area of the Coral Sea. At least we were told that we were travelling in that area. So it was not to be the Aleutian Islands, after all ... unless the orders were changed, in which case we would have to return to the coast and travel north once again. Finally, we were informed that we were heading for the China, Burma, India, and Southeast Asia theaters of war. I believe none of us greeted the announcement with much enthusiasm. All we could think of in our ignorance was that the area was filled with disease, rice, and Indians. And ... what the hell did a Burmese look like?

In the meantime Australia was close to us although it was too dangerous to land at Melbourne. The destination would be Tasmania .... What the hell did a Tasmanian look like? After backing and filling and running around in the ocean for what seemed like months but was in fact less than two weeks, we pulled into the longest, deepest harbor on earth at Hobart, Tasmania, to be greeted by the local military band playing *Deep in the Heart of Texas. The sun shines bright, even at night, deep in the heart of Texas.* Repeated over and over as we sailed into the harbor at Hobart. We were informed that we were the first American troop-ship to land at Hobart and that we would have a twenty-four hour pass ashore in groups of not more than 500 men. "Drunkenness will not be tolerated. No fighting with the locals. Court martial awaits any man promptly at the expiration of his pass." Not much of a sting in this threat. The worst that could happen was that once apprehended, a man would be taken back to the ship and his desertion (?) would go on his military record. Big deal! We were nearly all terrified civilians waiting for the war to end and hoping we would make it home.

Surprise! There were literally hundreds of women waiting for us on the docks. Except for the lame, the halt

and the well over sixty-fives, all Australian men were away fighting the Japanese or protecting Australia from a Japanese invasion which never happened. The waiting women were fine with us. We had been at sea for nearly thirty-five days, running all over the Pacific. Except for an occasional word with a nurse ("Not for you men"), we had had nothing to do with female company since leaving Wilmington, California.

I found Hobart fascinating and reminiscent of the small towns of Nova Scotia or of Maine with which I had been familiar. With a few of my mates, I went to a restaurant near the harbor area. On the menu I noted that Pacific prawns were available and within the meager pay of a private. I knew only that they were midway between shrimp and small lobsters and ordered six. The other men did the same although they had never had a lobster or a prawn in their lives. These middle Americans took one look at the 'bugs' and I was forced to eat twenty-four large prawns washed down with ale made not far away in a brewery where we were informed that Hobart was one of the largest producers of hops in the world and that we could have all the free ale we could drink. We did not return to the port area by bus mainly because we were in a poor condition and virtually rolled down the mountain into town. Walking about I saw my first avowedly Communist Party bookshop. This was quite a surprise to me. There may have been a CP bookshop in Boston or New York but there certainly wasn't one in Lynn.

Coming down hill from the bookstore, I had a rather curious experience. Several times over the previous years, I had had a dream in which the word "kumara" figured. I have no memory of the dream itself but of the word. Imagine my surprise to find a small house with the sign over the door, Kumara. Many years prior to the experience, I had read a book dealing with New Zealand and the Maori aborigines. It is quite possible that the word occurred in that book.

I returned to the ship where I hung about waiting to sail. We did, the very next day. It was rumored that three young officers had jumped ship and were not found at sailing time. Presumably they are now grandfathers in Hobart with large families of descendants. I hope so.

Since the Japanese were harrying shipping close to Burma, it became necessary for us to give Ceylon (Sri Lanka) a wide berth and to cut across the Indian Ocean and then up past Madagascar. At this point we were to cut across the sea and land at Bombay, India. We had two bad scares on this leg of the voyage. One afternoon the pom-pom guns started firing like crazy and several depth charges were dropped. If we had any escort on the entire trip, I did not see them, nor did anyone come into Hobart Harbor with us. Whether or not there was a Japanese submarine anywhere near us when we were in Tasmania earlier, we never found out, but the alert occurred twice before we managed to get into Princess dock, Bombay.

# 17

## Arrival in India

I first saw Bombay through the porthole near my bunk. My eyes scanned the far distance. The saffron-colored dust and the great mass and scramble of buildings, sheds, go-downs, offices, and factories. By standing on my toes and leaning forward, screwing my eyes downward across the edge of the porthole, I could see a mass of color, of brown faces, of arms flung skyward. A brown and bearded face turned up and the eyes stared directly into mine. The person turned away and across his shoulders was slung a great long sword. With a thrill I realized I had been transported to the fantasy world of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, a book I had been enamored with from the age of seven:

He sat, in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zamzamar, on her brick platform, opposite the old agaide-gair. The "Wonder House" as the natives called the Lahore Museum. "Who holds Zamzamar, that fire-breathing dragon ... holds the Punjab." For the great green bronze beast is always first among the conqueror's loot. There was some justification for Kim. He had kicked LaLa Dinninat's boy off of the trunnion, since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English. Though he was burned blacker than a native. Though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother tongue in a clipped, uncertain singsong,

though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar, Kim was white, a poor white of the poorest. The half-caste woman who looked after him smoked opium and pretended to keep a second-hand furniture shop nearby. She told the missionaries that she was Kim's mother's sister." (From the version recorded by Anthony Quail.)

What tale could have been more thrilling to a lonely child uncertain of his future, building dreams of an uncertain past ... or parentage? Do we not all at times dream that we are princelings dropped on the doorstep of a poor ... but honest ... family?

Even now, I become emotionally excited as I read those words. Something in the cosmos must have been working for me to send me to India. Never did I dream I would actually get there. Dream of India? A country so far away, so strange, so exotic, so beyond belief. The fourteen year old dishwasher from Lynn had made it again!

As I looked out at the great crowds of dockworkers, one man glanced directly into my eyes ... smiled ... and gave the clench-fisted salute of workers everywhere. What better greeting could I have received and returned?

We were given a short eight-hour leave to view the sights of Bombay before being packed into a train and moved north and east to yet another replacement depot. We had no great desire to engage the enemy but were getting pretty fed up with being 'warehoused' all over the globe.

Heading east by train ... with all our kit. Keeping our eyes glued to the windows, not wishing to miss any sight along the way. (Not quite true, of course. We had a large group of poker players whose eyes never left the devotional cards.) Sitting on long benches parallel to the length of the cars ... wooden benches, decidedly uncomfortable. Cold breakfast of 'K' ration, eggs and bacon in a tin. I stupidly cut my finger on the little strip from Uncle Sam's can.

Something I might do many times. Cold coffee, tasting like mud.

“Do not eat any of the native food. I guarantee it is filthy. You will all end with rotted guts. Have nothing to do with the local women. They are all diseased. American boys are fair game for all of these cunts. Their greatest wish is to infect you. They are on the side of the dirty Japs.” These were the more mild instructions of our officers, few of whom had ever been away from small towns in Middle America.

The engine of our train was an old coal-burner as, I suspect, were most of the engines at that time. Again and again we stopped at small stations along the way. Along each station platform hundreds of farmers vied with each other to sell us onions, coconuts, mangos ... all sorts of exotic fruits and vegetables we were forbidden (unsuccessfully!) to buy. One fat Indian came to the window of my coach and, smiling hugely, folded his great belly between his palms: “Jiga-jig Sah’jint...jig-a-jig?” Offering to let us stomach fuck him for a few paise...there were no takers that I could see.

Great pyramids of hot chilis, appearing as mountains, built-up on racks, lay drying and blazing in the sun as we passed. At times alongside the puffing train, magnificent white oxen pulled great loads of cane. Often in the distance we saw strings of camels plodding along, their sleepy drivers, giving the beasts an occasional desultory flip with a stick. This was the only time we saw camels in all of India.

At one small station my eye caught sight of piles of the largest tangerines I had ever seen. Several of us, despite the adjurations of our officers, motioned a vendor over to the train window: “How much?” “Two rupia, American soldier.” “Too much, pohut dam hai.” (Showing off our newly acquired Hindi from our phrase book). At that point our Hindi fled. We were reduced to speaking American-English, which the ignorant natives spoke very well. I believe we paid the man off in US ten cent pieces, of greater value than the rupee at that time. We were ordered not to over-

pay for anything, lest we "... disturb the Indian economy." In other words, don't make waves, be as cheap as the Raj.

Three days later we arrived at the small town of Asansol, where we would be billeted for several days or even weeks for no reason we could fathom before being shipped eastward again. After we had set up our tents and mess hall, we went into the town on the second day. Asansol was not among hills and was noted for its dust storms, not a natural occurrence but as a result of the thousands of American, British and East Indian feet which had destroyed all of the earth's natural cover. I saw only one main street with a few alleys off to the sides. The street was covered with cow-dung and people were lying about in various states of dress and undress. There were great white cattle everywhere. Thus we were introduced to the sacred cows of India roaming the streets and taking an occasional nibble at the produce displayed with its covering of flies.

It was our first extended experience of being let free in an Indian town. There is never any mistaking Indian cities ... so many unfamiliar sights and sounds ... and odors. Yes, especially odors. Over every other experience, deeper and most viscous is the odor of human and animal shit. Rudyard Kipling describes India as the most democratic country on earth. The children of both rich and poor dress alike and eat the same foods. I expect this statement is true of children everywhere and at an age not advanced enough to discover the advantages of wealth. This democracy disappears when the children return to their homes: the poor to their hovels and the rich children to their mansions.

"Baksheesh, sahib, baksheesh?" Beggars everywhere. I expect that on our \$17.00/month we appeared like princes of wealth. Our cigarettes were ten-cents/package, U.S. I traded cigarettes for "Red string, Biri," the native cigarettes which were composed of materials of great mystery wrapped in a dried leaf. The red string supposedly indicated that the contents were marijuana. My first experience with the devil's weed. The experience continued throughout my stay in India. Upon my return I did not smoke it for fifteen

years. If it was an addiction, it certainly was neither better nor worse than tobacco.

Walking through one of the local bazzars, I was approached by a fortune teller: "Tell your fortune, sahib. I tell very good fortune. You lucky man." Although I had little interest in the art, I asked how much (it was always much too much as a first price). We continued our bargaining and I continued saying "No" until he laughed, and we had finally settled on a cigarette or two when I turned to him and repeated a line from *Kim*. "He who would truly tell a fortune must not request to be paid or else he will lose the power to foretell future and past. "At this he laughed again and suggested he would tell my fortune out of pure friendship. We sat under a tree and shared a cigarette. He told me that I would never be rich but that I would always be loved. I accepted that. We sat quietly for a few more minutes. The seer then suggested I might make him a small gift. I gave the man a full package of Lucky Strikes. That concluded our friendship.

Back in camp we had no duties to perform, as we were waiting to be shipped out again. Many of the men sat about drinking, smoking, and bitching about army life, as is usual among all soldiers. Being in an army is the lowest anyone can sink to. Aside from that camaraderie between men of equal rank, every stupid jock above you is really on your case, fearful that they may be forced at any moment to return to their jobs as soda jerks, shop clerks, or lumpers in a mill. Commissioned officers or non-com, they will accept every prerogative of their rank to use as levers against the 'lower ranks' (a British expression which means exactly what it implies).

After 'chow' it had become quite dark and I retired to my tent. As the sun set, the entire camp settled quietly down. As I lay in my bunk attempting to gain some relief from the intolerable heat, I heard at a great distance the sound of a flute and a drum. The sound seeped into me and then faded away, only to be followed by an answering stringed instrument (a Veena, as I learned later) somewhat closer to

the camp. This dialogue continued until the sun had completely fallen and the moon was rising. All then was silence as I had not known silence before. I felt secure and at home in India, and never for a moment did the feeling leave me in all of the eighteen months I would remain.

Little else of any importance happened at Asansol. A jackal crept into my tent one night and awoke me with its terrifying stink. Two nights later I was awakened by the sound of cursing and laughter. Lifting the rear tent flap, I could see a line of perhaps ten soldiers and beyond them the flash of plump white thighs. Lying down with her skirt over her head and her legs spread, she was taking on all comers and collecting the cash. (No cheques or promissory notes?)

# 18

## Dacca

“Off we go ... into the wild blue yonder” (For blue read purple and a thousand other tints and hues.) Not for many weeks were we to be airborne. We left Asansol and proceeded by train east and south to what we thought would be our permanent base, still without a clue as to its position on the earth. Eventually our train reached the city of Dacca, then in India but now in a part of Pakistan called Bangladesh. From Dacca we marched and trucked to the airbase Tezgoan ... our home away from home, where I was to remain for over two months. Now that is real permanence!

Tezgoan was no different from other military installations except that I ran into a bit of both luck and misfortune. One morning while passing to my boring job of testing aircraft instruments, I stopped at the squadron bulletin board and read a notice : “Volunteers needed. Persons with small boat experience required to operate Landing Craft Vehicles/Personnel Riverine, LCVP(R),” This sounded interesting. After all I had been born and raised close to the sea and had rowed many a boat on lakes and small rivers. Entering the office, I gave the officer in charge a long line of bullshit and was immediately appointed operator of a LCVP(R) on a nearby tributary of the Ganges at a town called Naranganj. I obtained temporary release from my aircraft instrument job and ... was off. Now I know one is not supposed to volunteer for anything in the military for fear what one receives is bound to be worse than what one has, the theory being that any volunteer position is

necessarily dirty, rotten, with long hours, and totally undesirable. That's why volunteers were called for. I had not had this negative experience. Once when I volunteered for latrine duty, I found myself cleaning toilets and filthy floors three hours per day, but I had all the rest of the day to myself to sit by the hot water heater and read.

Naranganj was a small village often beset by parades of naked people protesting the lack of cloth for clothing. Moored to the river bank were several landing craft all named for medical colonels. My craft was named for Colonel Seagrave, the famous American missionary surgeon in Burma. The boat was forty feet long, plywood, driven by two enormous Grey marine engines. A small pilothouse on a short raised deck at the stern served as the pilot's station as well as for sleeping and dining quarters. The bow of the boat was simply a large ramp somewhat extended to prevent the river from entering. It was effective only at the slowest of forward speeds and then only with the craft unloaded, which thrust the bow so high that the river disappeared. My job as skipper was to move down the river as far as Comilla and discharge or pick up vehicles, supplies, and walking wounded. For the first time in the army I had a worthwhile occupation.

The river was beautiful and often terrifying. The Indo-Ganges Delta is a great, flat area nearly at sea level throughout; the slightest spate upriver often resulted in great changes in the river channel. We had what passed for a river pilot aboard, but he rarely knew where the river might meander in its course to the Bay of Bengal. At evening, the posts marking the channel could be seen tranquilly bobbing their floats in the river. The following morning succeeding a heavy rain, the marker poles with disconsolate bubbles hanging from their tops meandered through muddy ditches with the river going its own merry way. Only the dead and corrupting bodies knew the true course of the river and could frequently be seen floating along on their little rafts bedecked with wilting flowers, as vultures, probing their heads into body cavities, pulled out a morsel of liver. Villages, fishing

craft moored to the shore at night, might find the village land-locked in the morning, boats no more than decorations.

“And, what do you do, my friend?”

“Nothing ... God moved the river. God will return her to us.”

Hardly an American, go-getter response, it had served the Indians for thousands of years.

My crews, two native persons and one GI plus the sometime pilot, were a jolly bunch, rarely paying much attention to my orders ... which were few. (After all, although I was captain by name, my rank was still only private.) Nathan came to me one morning and, hauling out his penis, asked me to examine it. I saw tooth marks. Nathan declared the wounds were the result of splinters from the boat-rail. The affair appeared to be festering, and I sent him off to Tezgoan to see the medics. We had a medical captain there who became quite friendly with me. He had two large footprints painted on the floor of his clinic, an uncomfortable distance from one wall. The patient was instructed, “Drop your pants. Assume the position. Feet on the prints. Hands on the wall.” At just about this point, the good doctor exhibited a very large syringe and needle preparatory to jabbing it quickly into a very tense buttock. When the victim recovered somewhat, he was told that this procedure would be followed every day for seven days.

I had occasion to avail myself of the doctor’s mercy although not for venereal disease. We had been working nearly all night to remove several trucks stuck on a river bank when our mooring rope became caught beneath the LCVP(R) and tangled in the propellor. Since no one else was willing, I dove into the filthy river and managed under water to cut loose the rope. I thought little of it at the time. Two days later I came down with a raging fever and was driven to the hospital, where my friendly doctor needled me.

A very weird experience: Shot full of morphine, I lay half-comatose on the native bed (charpoy). Somehow in my delirium I focused my eyes on a place in the corner of the room where two walls met the ceiling. At this point my eyes

flew to the juncture and I could look down at the bed. Laughing crazily, I could see the poor tortured body, every joint apparently stuck full of long, silver needles, writhing madly attempting to escape...I felt no pain, only the sensation of being elsewhere, of being totally divorced from the events taking place on the bed. The sensation lasted for perhaps a minute, or an hour, or hours. I had no way of calculating time. I do know that I lost nearly twenty-five pounds within eight or ten days. Southern India is filled with these disease traps for the unwary or wary foreigner. British medics told me that "All WHITE MEN go through these experiences but being of superior stock, they overcome disease." In my experience, black men have no more toleration for disease than white men and, besides, East Indians are in general more Aryan than European and are far less fed.

After returning to my idyllic duty on the river, I was soon given new orders: back into the great mass of GIs and off to new duty at Chittagong in western Bangladish, ... the hell-hole of the world. The media have given us a view of the area and of the severe flooding which occurs after heavy rains upon this land nearly at sea-level.

Imagine being locked into a sweat-box from which there was only one means of succor: to stand naked with your comrades beneath a great tree in the jungle through which roared the dirty, sulfur-stinking but cool water from a deep, bored well. This was the Chittagong area in 1945. Blazing sun above tree-tops. Feet in watery mire. Because of a feared Japanese advance (which never arrived, since the Japanese were starving in the jungles of Burma), all of the boats of local fishing fleets had been burned, as had many of the fish-packing sheds. The duty was difficult, and the food was guaranteed to give one the shits. I was impressed by only one person. His name was Blackman, Jackman, or possibly Blackadar. As a representative of the American Friends' Service Committee (Quakers), he was making small interest-free loans to the local fisher folk. I have no doubt these loans were paid back in time.

The instrument trailer of which I had charge was completely equipped with manometers and small vacuum chambers, as well as other instruments for checking and repairing aircraft instruments. Wonder of wonders, because many instruments required cooling, we had an air-conditioning unit, guaranteed to cool beer far more efficiently than spraying the bottles with aviation gasoline. Unfortunately, the AC unit came to us without Freon and so was useless ... more than useless, it was a constant goad. There was really very little instrument work for me to do. Every time (and it happened frequently) an aircraft crashed in the jungle, the first thing to disappear was not the dead pilot but the expensive chronometer. Next came any rippable flight instruments, ammunition, wing cameras and the pilot's survival gear. After all, the pilot either got out safely, or was floating around in the Bay of Bengal, or was dead and no longer required anything but, perhaps, a moment's pity.

From Chittagong we often flew to Cox's Bazaar on the coast or, even further, to Hay and Fenni in the Andaman Islands, inhabited by a 'primitive' jungle people. (Much of these islands is now national preserves open only to certified, documented anthropologists). Hay and Fenni lay between a range of high hills, and the landing strip was less than ideal, since aircraft had to 'skinny' between the hills where usually the wind was blowing from the wrong direction. Consequently, the pilots had to bank as they threaded the hills...straightening out only at the last moment, to come in and land. One Sunday we received five new P-47 aircraft complete with pilots. By Wednesday three of the planes had crashed on landing and flames had consumed three young men. So goes the war. Another screw-up by military in Washington based upon reports by alleged intelligence in the field based upon information received from ex-plantation owners with their own axes to grind. So goes any war.

Goldberg's Beanery, tucked away on a jungle road in Chittagong, was the only decent army mess I experienced in India. Sergeant Goldberg was a product of New York's

Brooklyn and an army cook renowned throughout Southern India for his superlative use of common army food. Now, army food begins, even in such places as India, far from Coca-Cola and mom's apple pie, as reasonably decent fare. Army cooks, being for the most part misassigned mechanics or physicists, appear to hate the work they are required to do and consequently make every effort to concoct an unappetizing stew of even the best tinned 'C' Ration. Not so Sergeant Goldberg, to whom I give the highest awards.

Cox's Bazaar and the Burma drop. Literally hundreds of C-46s (it seemed like thousands) around the clock loading, taking off for Burma and China and returning in a turn-around to load and take off again. From Cox's I was removed to Kharegpur and Salua Base, a great replacement depot. The war in Asia was running down. I had now achieved the exalted status of corporal (or was it tech sergeant?) and was placed in charge of engineering, a job which basically meant running the various civilians running the various generators on Salua Base as well as Dhukundi. Not a very demanding job, I was also required to take charge of laborers.

Nathan Glassford, private, was a small, whippy raw-boned Texan, about as ignorant as they come. This is not to bad-mouth all Texans. I have met a few I have liked and several I have tolerated. Glassford was not one of them. We became deadly enemies from the moment we set eyes on each other. The attitude is rare with me although I admit I am fond of few people I meet. Toleration, without love or intimacy, must be a New England trait. Glassford was dirty in his person and dirty in his mouth. He appeared to hold in contempt anyone not a member of his barracks and those few only because he could not beat up on them. Nathan was also a truck driver under my direction and had the daily job of picking up native workers in their village in the morning and returning them in the afternoon. Nathan also had a girl friend in Kharegpur. Many of the workers suffered from Malaria and other illness but their condition meant nothing to Nathan, who crowded them into the back of his truck and drove like a madman through the jungle in the late

afternoon because he wanted to fulfil his slight obligation to me and get to town.

One afternoon the native boss man came to me with the news that the previous day Nathan with his usual lack of caring had caused one of the workers to break his arm when the truck was rammed through a ditch at the roadside. Two other workers were badly shaken up. Glassford simply cursed at them and dumped them out near their village. After I learned of the incident, I told Glassford that it best not happen again or I would take his truck away from him and place him on report. This action would make it impossible for him to get to town. He took my dressing-down in the office, but that evening as Dwight Pettit, my 1st Sergeant friend and hut mate, and I sat drinking our usual concoction of beer laced with Gilbey's gin, my door burst open and in stormed THE TEXAN, blood in his eye and drunk and waving his pistol. I got up and told him that he'd better make his first shot count because I would kill him with my bare hands. The threat worked ... Nathan stormed out of the basha. Dwight sat looking at me in amazement: "Don, I never would have believed it of you." Well, I hardly believed it of myself and could barely raise the bottle to my lips, I was shaking so.

We heard a gunshot. After waiting for ten minutes, Dwight and I went outside to find that Glassford had shot and only wounded a monkey belonging to one of the other men. Perhaps the hardest task I ever had was to raise a large rock over my head and bring it down on the head of the monkey, killing it instantly. Another facet of army life, perhaps life anywhere when one is under continuing stress.

Kharegpur was a pleasant enough city when we had time off from Salua Base to visit. Here I had my first direct experience with colonialism in India. The European Club was just that .... The only Indians allowed were the white-jacketed servants. I do not recall any American GIs of color being allowed entry, and that category included Hispanics, American Indians, blacks and even dark-skinned Italians.

In fact, they did not push the lack of invitations. It was simply 'understood.'

Dwight and I attended a dance at the club although neither of us danced. The Brits were all dressed in their best bib-and-tucker. Their women looked like fashion plates from Godey's Ladies' Book of 1910. The men were ruddy but the women never stood in the midday sun and their skins were as white as flour. The orchestra consisted of three aged women and one ancient man ... strings only, and that included the badly out-of-tune piano. There were Anglo-Indians at the dance, ignored, uninvented and hardly recognized. WOGS, the impolite term for all Indians and Anglos, was said to mean 'War Office Government Servant,' but I have my doubts even that little respect was accorded them. How Dwight and myself were invited I shall never know. Probably a mistake, since none of the British Other Ranks was allowed beyond the doorway from the bar assigned for Other Ranks Only.

Just outside Kharegpur, Salua Base was a vast sprawling area of military supplies including men. One day Dwight Petit and I were rooting about among the piles of junk and dross left over from the declining war, attempting to find some way of justifying our existence and keeping out of 'shit' details, the make-work projects so dear to the hearts of the officers. We came across two movie projectors as well as two 16" record players. A movie theatre! We brought our proposition before the appropriate authorities and were given permission to build our movie house. A bulldozer graded a large, fan-shaped space. We found hundreds of old bomb frames for seats, built a small shack to hold our equipment, strung wires, had a large screen built ... and were in business. This one may have been the quickest, most effective project ever constructed on an army base. Nearly everyone on Salua Base was going mad at the inactivity ... awaiting orders to return to the US, or Canada or Great Britain. After drinking to immobility, smoking dope to the same condition and fighting amongst ourselves, everybody welcomed the theatre project. Melvin Douglas, American

actor and head of the Special Services in India, passed through and must have given his OK to the project. It was successful and continued until the base complement had dropped quite low.

After 1st Sergeant Dwight Petit and I had set up the movie theater beneath the stars, we began to have time of our own. For us it was tremendously important not to be under the thumb of command and to be able to move freely. I set up a radio repair shop in our basha (hut). I knew very little about radio repair, but that was no barrier. Dwight explained to our commanding officer that I was engaged in a very important pursuit which would pay off in a happier bunch of men: they would all have radios. The commanding officer was one Colonel Emmanuel Elizalde of the family owning much of the transportation in the Phillipine Islands. Also a graduate of West Point. (I doubt he was at the top of his class.) We rarely saw him (good), since he was usually playing around in Calcutta. Dwight had majored in psychology at Colgate University, Hamilton New York and used his skills to the fullest to con everybody out of whatever we required including quantities of beer and whisky, somewhat above our rations.

Our bashes were simple wood and straw affairs, almost secure enough to keep out the wind in the dry season and the rain in the monsoon. One night we heard a yell from the next hut and found that a group of Dacoits (thieves) had gone into the basha while its six occupants were sleeping and stolen everything that wasn't nailed down. One of the men awoke from his drunken slumber just enough to see a vague figure racing away. Although the soldier gave chase, spraying bullets at random, the Dacoit got safely away. The next morning I arranged a high-voltage trap in our doorway. That night we heard a scream and saw a flash of blue light. The robber took off at high speed.

Around this time I was invited to meet the Mahatma Mohandas K. Gandhi by friends within the Congress Party whom I had met at Tezgoan. Gandhi was to give a speech at Midnapur near the prison where Jawaharlal Nehru and

others had been incarcerated on a charge of civil disobedience. This invitation appeared to me to be a great opportunity. Unfortunately, I made the mistake of telling my commanding officer, a 'good old boy' from somewhere in the southern U.S. I had already had one run-in with him on the matter of water shortages. He felt I had insulted southern womanhood by informing them that they should use their helmets as wash basins like the rest of us. However, the major thought my meeting Gandhi might be good PR and ordered two MPs with full armament to accompany me in a following Jeep.

I cancelled the meeting immediately. Bright and very early the next morning I got into my Jeep and quietly left the base headed for Midnapur by a back road. As an excuse, if I should require an excuse, I drove close by a small valley where resided a very large troop of Langurs. These lovely, nearly white monkeys with black eye-patches completely ignored me and went about their business. Soon I had arrived at Midnapur only to be trapped in a moving crowd. What to do? I signalled to a couple of boys with banners. They jumped aboard and we progressed along with the rest of the parade. I'm sorry to say I did not meet Gandhi. However, I managed to get close enough to see the slight, brown man and to hear his impassioned speech. I continue to believe that, despite his reputation as a deeply spiritual person, he was also one of the most astute politicians India has produced.

The war had gone on for a long time and the men were tired. Several of the soldiers had received "Dear John" letters from home indicating that the women they had left behind had found other lovers more pleasant and present. In our squadron out of a complement of 2000 men, we had three suicides in one month. Undoubtedly these were for personal reasons but except for one man quite close to our basha, who hanged himself, we did not learn their reasons. That one soldier was generally disliked because of his dishonesty. He had the peculiar attitude that he could purchase friendship from anyone in the camp simply because he had

a wealthy father back in California. One incident in which he was involved had given all of us a certain amount of pleasure. We had a service club on the base that was guarded by a Gurkha soldier. He stood by the door as a gentle warning that no fighting would be allowed although he did little to discourage the sport. One evening our California delinquent drunkenly asked to see his kukri (a large knife.) The kukri is never to be drawn unless it is bled. Even when sharpening the knife, the soldier must scratch himself to draw a bit of blood. The Gurkha, of course, refused the request whereupon our drunken idiot made a grab for the kukri and succeeded in withdrawing it from its scabbard. Our little Nepalese soldier spun gracefully upon his heel, grabbed the miscreant and neatly sliced off a finger. End of story.

In the midst of all of this business, we received word that the war had ended with the dropping of some sort of big bomb on the Japanese. The news made surprisingly little impression upon us ... just another day among many days of boredom. The notice caused a momentary ripple of interest and then died out.

# 19

## Back to Uncle Sam ... Not Me

In many ways that period, just after that particular war, was more exciting than the war itself. I suppose all of us had lived in limbo for three years or more secretly believing we might never return home. Now with the war's end a hope existed. If anything, the hope made us more careful of any trouble we might get into. Except for the usual few screw-ups, soldiers tended to be very cautious and to obey to the minimum point expected of them. Draftees of WW2 learned the ropes from the older, more 'professional' soldiers ... those who were doing their time as easily as possible without making waves.

One incident is of more than passing interest. It appears that a high-level decision was made to ship materials back to the United States in complete disregard of the status of the men. At the same time, since the war had ended, shipping rates by sea had increased from the 1/2 cent/lb. rate which had obtained almost from the beginning of the war to the pre-war rate of 12 cents/lb. A great many heavy tanks, among other material, could be fitted into a freighter travelling to the States, and these required no food or other support; such as toilets, bedding, or medical supplies. Tanks were dead cargo. When the Seamen's Union of the Pacific (SUP) got wind of this affair, the members refused to handle any cargo which excluded soldiers. Of course the SUP was accused of being Communist-led. Now that the war was at an end, this accusation, in the case of their leader Harry Bridges (a feisty Australian), was never made to stick because

until 1949 the Australian did not exist; all were British and 'Colonial Boys.' However, the accusation was used many times later in an attempt by the Dies Committee to discredit the SUP after the Soviet Union was once more revealed as the 'real enemy.'

Subsequent to the revelations, a great rally of GIs (US, Australian, British and Canadian) was held at Monsoon Gardens in Calcutta. Although I was not present, it was my understanding that the gathering was considered a rebellion and was engaged in by many soldiers, both men and women. It was not considered prudent by the brass to prosecute. A great lesson may be learned from this action.

At Salua, Dhukundi, and other bases, we simply stopped work, which held up all vehicles, and downed tools. This action included Canadians as well as American and British troops. I believe this demonstration brought about the Point System. Each soldier received three points for each year of service as well as six points for each three months of service overseas. One required in excess of eighteen points in order to be repatriated. Thanks principally to the Seamen's Union of the Pacific and our protest action, the men were given priority over "goods and materials."

I doubt this perceived largess was unalloyed. We found that manufacturers were not displeased with the event. Few of them wanted the return of the millions of pounds of material (trucks, command cars, all sorts of mobile equipment), much of which would only be sold as junk and slow the production of new goods. One should add here that East Indian entrepreneurs were virtually standing in line to buy up anything available from the various armies.

With the end of WW2, events for many speeded up. Within two weeks all of the old-timers including my friend Dwight Mortimer Pettit shipped out of Salua and Dhukundi to Calcutta en route home to the US and discharge. The remainder like myself had less than three years of service overseas and had to remain in India. Several of us, including one Lieutenant Stanley Schwartz from New York and Sergeant Glen from Louisiana, were initially made a seven-

man security detachment to guard all of the Air Force material and supplies in Eastern India. Of course this order was almost meaningless. Had we been somewhat braver we would have sold everything in sight. At the Dukundi Base alone there was row upon row of vehicles of every description including a desert tank retrieval unit. There were a number of P-38 aircraft as well as two of the most advanced craft of the period, the Black Widows. Attached to the base was a fairly large ammunition dump which was to be disposed of. This job normally went to the Engineer Corps but we were happy to take it over and spent many pleasant hours shooting .50 calibre machine-gun bullets into 500 lb. bombs. We also attached gelignite (?), nitro-starch (?) to the aircraft and blew them to pieces. With other materials we were not quite so destructive.

At Dhukundi Base, Glen and I were soon the only American personnel in the area, the other four having shipped out. Glen outranked me by two stripes. We occupied an old engineering corps site consisting of several buildings, a garage, and an enormous water tank holding many thousands of gallons of potable water. Since we were in charge of literally hundreds of vehicles of every description, we could commandeer a new vehicle every day if we had wished. For the expenses of running the base, we were given a monthly budget of 10,000Rs which included an entire troop of Gurkha guards (GG) to secure the perimeter of the base and landing strips. Out of the budget we hired a houseboy and a cook. If any army duty can be considered a soft berth, this was it! Twenty-five years old with an expense account and all the new and old vehicles we could ever hope to wreck.

In addition to all of this and heaven as well, we received a bi-monthly airdrop of supplies for the GGs and ourselves. On one such drop we were supplied with a carton containing over 1000 Pro-kits, including an equal number of prophylactics for Safety First use and a trunk filled with books. On another drop we were made a present of a blanket, suspiciously stiff: the female donor felt somewhat uneasy

about returning home with this evidence of profit and pleasure.

Glen and I were soon masters of all we could survey, which was considerable, since the base was very large. Except for eating and sleeping, we had little to do. Oh, perhaps we could drive around and survey the base, but the Gurkhas did this anyway and would probably only resent our interference with whatever deals they had going. The Gurkha camp was several miles away at the far end of one of the airstrips. Their wives and many children travelled with them. This seemed a neat deal. No need to fool around with the locals since the family was right on site.

Saloman had worked for me earlier when I had been in charge of several water-pumping stations at Salua Base near Kharegpur on the Bengal Nagpur Railway and had come with me when I moved to Dhukundi. He asked if he could go to his home in Jamshedpur. He had not seen his wife or family for several months. Since the driver would take only twenty-four hours or so, Glen and I decided to go too. Certainly none would miss us, as the next airdrop was several days ahead.

Choosing and servicing a brand new Jeep, loading it with supplies, off we drove. Somewhere, nearly half a day's journey out of Jamshedpur, travelling over a gravel jungle road, Salomon suddenly pointed to the right and slewed into a side path. We soon came to a very commodious bungalow deep in the jungle. We stopped, not wishing to intrude. Sitting on the deep porch was a small, white man. He beckoned to us and we drove to the porch.

It turned out he was a retired railroad engineer, living by himself except for two servants and anxious for company. Garrulous the old Welshman was and an excellent historian. At the end of WW1, after serving in India and being discharged, the old man had had no reason to return to England and the low working class life he had left behind. He went to work for the Bengal Nagpur Railway and remained with that railroad until his retirement at the end of WW2. His house had been 'free' and abandoned after the

TATA mines had closed sometime during 1920. Several of the large concrete houses were scattered about and he had simply moved in.

Our conversation continued over tea until the Welshman cautioned us to be quiet. Moving silently from the jungle, a large cat approached the steps, stopped, raised its head and examined us, and quietly turned and made off through the bush. "Oh, not to worry abat tha' fellow, he cooms through here most every late afternoon, then leaves on his evening hunt." We remained the night, albeit somewhat uneasily, and left next morning after refusing a generous offer for the Jeep, from our host.

Late that next evening we came near Salomon's village. He found us a basha to occupy during our stay and disappeared, returning a few hours later bearing hot food and two young women, who would remain the night. Early the following morning we heard laughter and splashing coming from the nearby river. Looking out the one window of the basha, we could see the two young women naked as jaybirds splashing about having a glorious bath. Glen and I immediately jumped out of the window and joined them in play.

The following day Salomon directed us to a spot deep in the jungle and far from any road. High in a large tree was a machan, a stick and grass platform with a rope ladder leading upward. The platform was quite close to a fair-sized stream across which a small, forlorn goat was tethered. Glen, Salomon and I sat in the tree for what seemed like several hours. Finally, dozing off, I was awakened by a dig in the ribs. Looking to the other side of the stream, I saw a very, very, large tiger proceeding down the trail. It walked right by the terrified goat and bent to lap water. Then looking up, the tiger stared me right in the eye. I kept more silent than ever before in my life and looked down at the wee .30 calibre carbine I held, hoping that the beast would not see my puny weapon. Glen and Salomon did the same. We became even quieter. The tiger flipped its tail and simply melted into the

bush. I believe the goat must have died of fright. It was delicious none the less.

During our stay in Jamshedpur, we met the wife of a Frenchman who had been working as a metallurgist in India since long before WW1. He had his 'Class' called up for service in France but had refused to leave India. Instead he had joined a clan of Jongli people, a primitive group, and perhaps the most primitive in India, living off the jungle in the simplest manner possible. We found it odd that the Frenchman's name was Morrow. Apparently, Jamshedpur was filled with such stories of persons retired or simply persons who had "gone-native" and refused to return to Europe.

I was offered a job at Jamshedpur, site of the TATA open pit iron mine, one of the largest on earth at that time. The job came with a salary of \$400.00US/month as well as a rent-free house and a Dearness (cost of living) Allowance. In 1946 four hundred dollars was a tremendous amount for any young person and especially when one was receiving \$21.00/month army pay. Going home eventually was more important after nearly two years away than the money and perks.

Salomon said his good-byes to his extended family. Our return trip was uneventful except that we espied a bear drunk on fermented plums. He paid little attention to us and simply staggered off into the bush leaving the two Great Hunters giggling like idiots. We continued on our way, arriving at Dhukundi just in time to shoo the cows off of the landing strip, greet the aircraft, collect our booty and wave goodbye.

Among the goods we received an entire 24-bottle carton of Brilliantine. As the pilot handed it over, he gave us a questioning look which we did not answer, since it would have required a very long and somewhat involved reply. Early on at Dhukundi, I had received a visit from a sergeant who had been stationed with me at Salua, although I did not know him. Now he informed me that he was leaving for 'Uncle' and would like to offer me a present of a sort. Two

years prior to 1945 he had paid a local person for his fourteen year old daughter. "Her name is Leela. She has been living with me for over a year. I bought her from her father and had her examined. She has been loyal to me ... keeping my place clean and taking care of me also. Leela was fourteen. I guess she is fifteen or sixteen now. I'm leaving for stateside and figure you can give her a good home for a while."

Leela was small, brown, and vivacious. Her English was excellent although peppered with strictly GI terms cribbed from several armies. Why did Glen and I feel the need for 24 bottles of Brilliantine? The answer is obvious. Leela wanted it for her bath. After thoroughly washing her brown body, she would anoint herself from head to heels with a good coating of Brilliantine after which she would once more retire to the shower we had rigged-up, wash the excess oil away and leave her body with a sheen like polished copper. At the weekly visits of the medics with condoms and other supplies, they wanted to know what we were doing with an entire case of Brilliantine every two weeks. We said it was quite oily and excellent for a pump lubricant. We often took Leela to Kharegpur to the cinema. All Indian movies. India at that time produced movies in twenty-six languages, ALL languages of India. Upon our return to the base, Leela would act out all the parts and sing all the songs from the evening's entertainment.

We had returned from Jamshedpur for only a short time when I received a message from Command in Calcutta informing me that I should call them immediately. When I returned the call, a general came on the line. This unusual event made me shake in my boots. No general had ever called ME before. I must have contravened some horrendous military rule. It appeared that Captain Whitehead, one of the few officers I had met as a friend while in the Air Force, was under investigation for diverting military material for personal advantage. I said that I knew nothing of this charge and that Whitehead was to my knowledge a fine person. My only involvement in the affair occurred when my monster instrument trailer had half of its roof sheared off

when a truck driver and I were transferring from Tezgaon to Chittagong. One can never know where all the shit in an army originates or what officer, feeling piqued, will maintain a long memory. There are many methods of diverting military material at the cessation of hostilities. Selling for gain through many channels, some actually appearing legitimate. Millions of dollars worth of perfectly useful materials: electronics, tools, machines of all sorts, and medical equipment. All of this material would be of great use in allegedly Third World countries. Rather than give it away, it is often blown up (as we blew apart aircraft) or simply bulldozed under the earth.

With the incredible mass of materials at Dhukundi, there was also a complete brass band that included one piano and a very powerful public address system. In addition, there was an entire electronics laboratory, tube checker, volt ohmmeter and tools. As a mere sergeant, there was not much I could do to move the equipment, but Captain Whitehead was quite willing to help. All the equipment was loaded onto a truck and we drove to Midnapur, parking the truck between two buildings at the university where it would be safe. We had tea and cakes with the dean of men and then went out to the truck, intending to take the equipment to another base where it might have been either put to use or destroyed. Imagine our surprise to find that, not only had everything been stolen in our absence, but that the truck had been washed and polished to sit gleaming in the sun. Oh, dear!

The captain was a pretty good soul. A club was started on the base where all of us could go and have a beer or two as well as play cards, darts, shove ha'penny, or just meet local girls. This place was soon placed off limits to enlisted men, which made all of us very angry. For one week the club was restricted to officers until a sign appeared over the door with the statement: OFFICERS, ENLISTED MEN, CIVILIANS AND FRIENDS ONLY. Apparently someone (we suspected the captain) had gotten to the power and had twisted it to our advantage. The club was a good deal, since

it kept out all those stuffy officers as well as those old-timers that hated all officers.

Hurrah! Glen and I had finally made the 18 points necessary to be returned home. We had only small work to finish and to see that the Gurkhas returned to their command area. Very late one evening, as we were about to bed down, one of the Gurkhas came running into the compound: "My daughter, she is about to give birth. Will you take her to the hospital at Kharegpur?" Of course, I would. (Glen was busy with his lady-friend.) I drove to the encampment. We packed the Jeep with pillows and with the help of the fat and smiling wife of the guard loaded in the very pregnant and very young woman. The girl seemed rather far along. I did not wish to drive any faster than necessary because of the rough dirt trails we travelled over on a short cut to hospital. We made it and delivered our prize to the midwife.

Two days later after a call from the hospital, I went to gather up her and her new baby. I drove there alone, and imagine my surprise to find the girl sitting on the steps of the dispensary holding her new child. I was shocked at such callousness on the part of the bureaucrats running the place. There was no one around to assist her. Without a thought I picked her up and placed her in the back seat of the Jeep. We made the long ride back to camp where I once more gathered the girl in my arms, as her mother took the baby, and brought her into the house amidst a great deal of laughter which I took for joy at the new child. Later the guard told me that his daughter was very embarrassed. It seemed that, with the exception of her siblings and her husband, no man had ever touched her before.

This I learned when I was invited to a sort of christening, and the presentation of the child to me and to the world. We sat at table where I devoured everything set before me without questioning the ingredients. Most food is delicious and doesn't injure the cooks, so why should I refuse to eat? I gave the new baby two handful of rupees as a present and received a shy smile in return from the mother. I went back to my seat where I drank an entire bottle of Lucky Tiger

brandy. (Back home Lucky Tiger had been a popular brand of hair-oil.) After we had gone through a ceremony that was more ancient than Buddhist, I bid goodbye and climbed into my Jeep for the drive home. In my condition I required every bit of the wide B-29 landing strip. Fortunately, the strip was unused, since the war had ended. My driving was no more hazardous than usual.

The foregoing was by no means my only experience in the medical business. One afternoon I was called out to treat the hand of one of the native women. It was badly lacerated and had been doctored with the common home remedy, cow dung. It was covered with maggots. I cleaned it up, dusted it with sulfa and bandaged the wound. I attended the woman twice after that and she appeared to get on quite well. I recalled reading that, at one time in the distant past, using maggots to debride wounds was quite common. So much for the advancement of medicine.

Another time I acted as a vet. As at all army bases, there was a surplus of abandoned dogs. When the population got too high, it was the practice of Military Police to shoot as many dogs as could be gathered in one place. One such dog was ours. One evening she dragged herself to our basha with a large hole in her leg. I probed about and removed the slug with a pair of needle-nosed pliers and gave her my usual treatment, sulfa and a clean bandage. She was fine, and very wary of leaving the compound for her nightly adventures.

I believe we had one other 'medical' experience. Glen's girl friend was the wife of a local doctor ... sans equipment. We packed an entire medical field unit onto a truck, intending to dump the material in an old latrine near the outside of the base. Someone stole everything in the truck. For all we know, a new hospital and clinic may have opened in Kharegpur.

Since this paradise was fated to end eventually, we made inventory of all the base materials. The old inventory sheets appeared to have changed little within the past few years. We added and deducted items and passed in the inventory. By this time we were the last operational base in eastern

India. The base itself would revert to the owner of the land (the Zemindar). Presumably all materials remaining would be shipped to the USA or sold at incredibly low price to the Zemindar. Thus do the very rich become very richer and the poor despair.

Calcutta was tremendously busy. Hundreds possibly thousands of other soldiers were preparing to return to their various home countries. As well as Americans, Canadians and Englishmen, there were Australians and even a few Greek soldiers. Both German and Italian POWs (Prisoner of War) were repatriated. The Kachin Rangers were there. They had been on Detached Service for several years in Burma and elsewhere. For the most part, they were a very pleasant bunch of men to soldier with, as were the Welsh troops in the British Army. I was surprised at the attitude of the few Brits I met: "Fuck the bloody Queen and the entire fucking bloody royal fucking family." Ah, this did my revolutionary Yankee heart good.

We were fed. We were fed four or five times a day. We were fed liver and onions and milk and coffee with cream and butter and eggs and ... I believe the ploy was to quickly remove the Atabrine yellow of our skins and to fatten us up so we would look half-human by the time we hit the States.

## 20

### Coming Home, April, 1946

**H**indsight or foresight: Accepting things as they appear to be. Refusing to be suspicious of new faces, new friends, and new thoughts.

We were happy to be returning 'stateside' and few wanted anything to do with continuing the military life. We were a civilian army called up to win a war. Very few of us were professional soldiers and would have felt anger had others believed such a concept. Many Americans (Yankees) felt that a 'Civilian Army,' like the Minutemen of 1776 would come when needed; otherwise, let us stick to our ploughing. The pre-WW2 peace-time army had given Americans the firm conviction that peace-time armies were composed of lay-about sucking off the body politic. "Too lazy to get out there and hump like the rest of us."

But we were going home with some disadvantages. A soldier's life consists of 'events,' each distinct in itself but with few strings tying them together into a whole. The entire business of planning for oneself is taken from the soldier. He is trained to focus on the task at hand. A young person does not 'die' in a war. The concept of dying is taken from him and held by others for whom he has little respect and admiration but for whom he has a hidden fear and wears a masque of obedience to orders. If the young soldier thinks of the past, it is with nostalgia. Thinking of any number of futures is a game: "When I get out, I'll ..." "When I grow up, I'll ..." He is the supreme fatalist, with no hope for a REAL future beyond what he is told. He may have many plans

but few can be allowed to exist beyond the fairy tale in his mind. And yet, he often shares this fairy tale with his comrades, who have become his 'family.' Perhaps the greatest fear every young soldier has is that he will fail his comrades.

Old-timers have been known to commit suicide with only a few months to retirement. Their fear is that having operated under military rule for so many years, they will be unable to measure up in civilian life. They fear their inability to plan for an independent life. Possibly the foregoing explains retired soldiers' fitting so well into safe and conservative jobs where they will not make waves. Such fear may also explain why some cities, such as, San Diego, have large populations of retired military types. One finds safety and comfort among one's comrades.

It is not unknown for old-timers to refuse re-enlistment for those last three important years before retirement. One reason may be that a very large percentage of Americans were new immigrants, many within a single generation. They had faced the repressive regimes of Europe and were suspicious of the government's offer of re-enlistment.

Perhaps I had been sleep-walking for the past three years. Moving about, conscious only enough to carry out my duties as a soldier without getting into too much trouble. The "Good Soldier Schweik syndrome."

However, I was at the Calcutta base hospital, and I was going home. One morning I was walking across the narrow verge separating the ring highway from the hospital when I heard my name. "Sergeant, Sergeant Don." I looked up and there in front of me stood Leela all dressed in a flamboyant sari and wearing heavy make-up. She was with several young female friends. They all sat down on the grass and I joined them.

Leela had left Dhukundi Base at about the same time as I emplaned for Calcutta. She had not followed me but had arrived quite independently to take employment in a house of pleasure with her chums. What else could a young girl do except to place herself under the protection of a Madame?

Even then I had few illusions and realized she had taken the only course open to her.

Within a few days the *General Bradley* was ready to return to New York carrying all but a few of the remaining GIs home to Uncle. I have almost no memory of boarding that ship. I hardly recall the journey except the overriding fear, which we all carried with us, that we might not finish the journey.

Down the Hooghly River we went, only to stop at the shallow tidal area where we had to await an incoming tide to carry the great ship almost by inches, it seemed, above the bottom. I understand it is no longer necessary as, because of some great scheme of the Indian government, the basin has been deepened. We soon learned that a shallow bottom was not all we need be concerned with. The entire journey down the Bay of Bengal, (stopping at Columbo, now Sri Lanka) and up through the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea, and finally through the Suez Canal was filled with the thousands of mines which had escaped their undersea cables and which floated, half-submerged ... just waiting for our boat to pass.

We came into the Suez Canal somewhat late in the evening. I crawled up into my bunk far below decks and slept. When I awoke the next morning and looked out the porthole near my head, I was surprised to see a second story balcony of a house staring back at me. We had made it through the canal despite several Victory ships, sunken at the Red Sea entrance. At Alexandria we lay over for a day before proceeding through the dangerous Mediterranean Sea, which was also filled with old floating mines. Somehow, the detritus of warfare didn't faze the high-speed Italian destroyer with its prize crew which sped by us, at that time one of the world's fastest ships. As I recall, the Italian designers were frequently ahead of other countries in the design of ships, the Supermarine aircraft, and countless automobiles. Once the design was complete, the Italians often lost interest. Somewhat like the ancient Chinese discovery of oil: it made a superior writing carbon but had little value beyond that.

It was aboard the *General Bradley* that I was approached by two young soldiers, privates, I believe. One introduced himself as Lyndon Hermiel LaRouche of Lynn, Massachusetts. I do not recall the name of the other chap who was from Salem Depot, New Hampshire, and later took over his father's business, Granite State Potato Chips. LaRouche explained to me that he had heard someone from Lynn was aboard and determined to meet me. (After 55 years, I remain somewhat puzzled as to his reasons.) It appears that LaRouche was a Conscientious Objector and had spent several months in a CO camp in New Mexico before becoming a Medical Aide man and being sent to India. Much later I learned that he came from a distinguished family of Friends from Lynn and that his father was editor of *Fur Hides & Leather*, a journal devoted to such matters. We got on well.

Once through the Mediterranean and past the remaining rotting hulks of the incredible waste of warfare, we cruised through the Atlantic ... OUR personal ocean ... and on into the mouth of the East River, New York.

The Statue of Liberty greeted us as she had greeted millions, "yearning to be free." And now, despite the cruelty of American business in its drive to imperial power, despite the restrictions upon that freedom, and my advancing age, I remain a participant in the American Revolution as I do in world change for all. A true Democracy of ALL people, rather than the lip service of a few. Given the present state of democracy in the United States, I would have one caviat: For myself the period of the American Revolution extends from 1771 to 1839. After that it goes downhill through the machinations of Alexander Hamilton and the banking industry.

We were warped in at Pier 51, not to the cheers of thousands of proud civilians but to a smaller crowd of somewhat bored Red Cross volunteers, who were passing out doughnuts and small cartons of milk. I'm certain we would have preferred stronger fare. Well, it was nice to receive something from the RC for free. People had become

pretty tired of WW2 and were moving on to future wars. I quote Henry David Thoreau: "Beware those who would do you good."

Off the ship and onto a train for Camp Joyce Kilmer, New Jersey, where we were 'processed' and made presentable again to be returned home. We were all shined and polished. Given a payment of our Mustering-out Pay. Declared physically fit. We were also given claim forms to list our wounds and real or fancied injuries ... Few made claims. We were too close to being let out of the Army of United States to make waves.

Somewhat later on another day, we of superior (?) Army General Classification Tests were gathered in a room and harangued for an hour by a very BIG non-com: "I wanna give you guys th' opportunity to make a full career outatthearmy." Hell, no. We were ready and anxious to gather the fruits of victory before they became over-ripe. Remember, we were the children of the Great Depression and had promises from Herbert Hoover et al.

Seven days from our arrival, we were given railroad tickets, in my case to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. A part of the discharge deal was that we could choose to be discharged to any place within the continental limits of the United States or its possessions. Oh, well, I'd get back to California one day in the distant future. On to the train and head east towards Boston and Fort Devens at Ayer. As we passed through Providence, the soldier seated in front of me turned to his friend: "Hey! I know this place. My brother-in-law, he's a big shot here" Says his friend: "Whadayamean, bigshot?" The soldier replies, "He's ... What you call the horse with two holes?" ... "Mare?" ... "Yeah, that's it, he's the mayor." Well, yes, a poor joke. But the timing was incredible.

Return to Fort Devens established prior to WW1 and somnolent until preparing us for the slaughter of WW2. Now Fort Devens falls back into the torpor of age while awaiting another Vietnam, Somalia, Iraq or Afghanistan.

Hurray! We had made it home and most of us in one piece. We were older but, as it turns out, not much wiser. After the remaining paper work at Devens, I took the train for Boston and then the subway from Park Street Under to Revere Beach. Gawking all the way like a tourist.

Outside the gate at Revere Beach, my Mother and Sue were waiting for me in my mother's new Ford coupe. I was allowed to drive the car. Gosh, while in the Air Force I had learned a skill that did not involve shooting. Driving along the Lynnway, towards Lynn, my mother said in a quiet voice: "We drive on the right, Donald." I adroitly missed an approaching truck and moved quickly to the right, just as we passed the Creighton Building

Strange. Although Sue looked very well, the reunion was hardly exciting. She had been very ill when I had left Lynn after a short visit during 1944. Now she seemed in the best of health although very quiet. Well, we were practically strangers. More than two years had elapsed, not counting the eighteen months I had lived alone when she had been in the Essex Tuberculosis Sanitarium.

My mother had only a small apartment in West Lynn on Harwood Street where she lived with Nathan Dill. It seemed reasonable that I would move in with Sue at her family home on Chestnut Street opposite Gold Fish Pond. I arrived at the Zappacosta home to a real greeting, not untinged with sadness, since Frankie Zappacosta had died in an aircraft crash in California while in the US Navy. I was very fond of Sue's father, Guiseppe Zappacosta, a quiet man and a shoe worker like Grandpa Weld.

Getting into bed that night very, very late, I heard a rattling. My army dog-tags I had not left off since I was signed on three years previously. Tearing them from around my neck, I threw them out the window and, for all I know, they may still be there, corroding into the earth.

# 21

## Settling in

We lived at the Chestnut address for a few months while I got my bearings and then returned to my job as Test Man at General Electric. Not to old Building 32 behind the old generator-winding building. Now there was an entirely new test department and manufacturing area not shared with the Moss Turbo Supercharger, which had been contracted out to Ford, et al. A pretty grand facility. Other changes had taken place too. Centrifugal jet engines had disappeared and we were working on the newer axial flow Aircraft Gas turbines. The hoses which had been on the older model engines had disappeared to be replaced by a design that was much closer to that of other types of turbines. The air was rammed into the front, passed through a long series of turbine wheels and into the combustion chambers where it was mixed with kerosene (jet fuel), burned and ejected through the tailpipe. This was a great design advantage over the earlier, more primitive engines. Although I doubt any American would agree, to me the engine seems much closer to the original Italian design I had seen in magazine pictures.

Sue and I appeared to get on well enough ... in public, at least. We fought over what, I cannot recall. I do recall telling her that we had been apart for nearly four and a half years, and changes would have taken place unnoticed had we been together. We simply would have lived with the changes and not been aware of them. We struggled on with these personal problems.

I was working on the day shift and had plenty of free time. For some reason I became interested in raising tropical fish, a hobby that blossomed into a small business. At the same time I began to collect books again, an interest of mine since childhood. We were fortunate in one excellent find: an entire trunk filled with old books, a small aquarium, a sewing kit, as well as odds and ends ... the lot for \$ 15.00 cash. We catalogued the books, sold many of them, receiving over \$100.00, and still retained over half of the books for a future sale.

These activities were all very interesting but did not solve our personal problems, which continued to worsen by slight degrees, not enough to totally destroy our relationship, but enough to make us uneasy and to spend more time in separate actions with hers. Sue had always felt that my friends became her companions but that I had very little interest in her friends. She was probably right. Except for a few friends in the shop, my older friends were either involved in the union or in socialist politics. Sue felt that I missed the Socialist Workers' Party comrades I had had before going into the army, and she joined the party to encourage me to do the same. I did. I also encouraged Lyndon LaRouche (from *General Bradley*) to join as well as a number of young persons with whom I was acquainted. Sometime in 1951 Sue and I were informed that the house in which we were living was once again required as a residence for aged men. We were fortunate in getting an apartment on Blossom Street in Lynn. It was an apartment house owned by Milton Levin, a friend and a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. One bedroom, living room, and kitchen as well as bath and small storage room in the cellar. Quite a come-down from the house we had been living in but quite satisfactory.

Blossom Street was on old East European and Russian Jewish neighborhood complete with two synagogues as well as several Jewish bakeries, a meat market, chicken market, and a really complete Greek market not far away. Practically a paradise for one who enjoyed food as much as I and my friends: Arnold Trachtman, the artist; Leonard Goodman, a

nurse and writer here on the West Coast, now deceased; Joey Bronstein, a student; as well as several other young men of my acquaintance, all of whom lived nearby. Lyndon LaRouche was around much of the time. We listened to a great deal of music in our apartment and drank considerable wine together.

From 1948 to 1968 prices related to wages were quite tolerable. Perhaps this was especially true where we were living ... a sort of Jewish ghetto in Lynn with Summer Circle, an enclave of recently arrived black people only a few blocks away.

Sue must have been in reasonably good health. She became pregnant and carried the child without a great deal of fuss. Although she suffered from some morning sickness, it was not serious enough to keep her from the part-time job she had at the Lynn Tuberculosis League. This must have been 1949.

Since hindsight is often more correct than foresight, I must write a note here regarding my/our relationship with Lyndon H. LaRouche. Lyndon and I had had long conversations as we were returning home aboard ship. Once back in Lynn, I lost sight of him, but he either telephoned me or I telephoned him and we became reacquainted. Subsequently he joined the Socialist Workers' Party. Until that time I do not believe anyone had actually signed any sort of document attesting to his or her membership. I cannot say for certain that LaRouche was behind the move to actually sign everyone up. In any event we all signed a card, using our natal names as well as our party pseudonyms (in my case, Carl Martin, as I had been previous to 1941). It seems to me that LaRouche used the name Grey but I cannot be certain. Aboard ship Lyndon had always brought along his friend when we had our conversations about Marxism and the changes taking place in the world. Three or four years after my discharge, I visited Lyndon's friend at his father's Granite State Potato Chip business in New Hampshire. I met a few of LaRouche's other friends as well. One of his Boston friends stands out: Porter Sargeant, editor of the *Blue Book of*

*Private Schools and Camps* (some such name). At Jake Wirth's restaurant in Boston, I also met Anna Schmoyer from Lynn, who had visited Germany just prior to the war and whose father Ralph Schmoyer became superintendent of Lynn School.

Lyndon LaRouche was a sort of shadowy figure. He came and went frequently. He was unemployed. His excuse was that he did not wish to become locked into some stupid job but would take his time and find something he really liked. Who could possibly deny him that?

Meanwhile, our lives went on. Week-ends in the summer-time were interesting. Sue and I would spend them at Ben Fishman's house on Sluice Pond, which was within the city of Lynn. Ben's father had bought the house years prior to our being there. Joseph Fishman was one of the loveliest men I ever knew. I know of no other word to describe him. He was always most kind, albeit always most fierce in his loyalties. Certainly I have written of this attitude many times in the past; a life without passion is no life at all. Joey had plenty of passion. He was a foreman at the Benz Kid Leather Co. in Lynn. At one time the plant had been struck. Joseph Fishman remained at home rather than cross the workers' picket line. When the strike was over, the returning workers asked; "Where is Joey Fishman?" The bosses replied that they had fired him ... Immediately the men walked out again and would not return until Joey was rehired. At Sluice Pond we were frequently joined by the three Fishman brothers and their sisters as well as wives, husbands and children.

## Unionist on the Front Lines

Our instrument room at GE was upstairs in the gallery, where I was greeted daily by Homer Lamphrey, our lead man, Tom Baker (Seabees), George Pothier, Bill Twiss (Infantry), and young Warren Mohr (Navy), who lived on Annafran Street in Boston's South End. We were a good working crew. I was immediately set to work building thermo-couples and velocity-measuring devices for the test facility atop Mt. Washington, New Hampshire.

Inquiring around, I found that, although I was expected to join the Local 201, United Electrical Workers, CIO, we had no representation in the shop. Dropping in at the new local offices, I signed up and took the suggestion that I should run for shop steward. Without opposition I became the union representative for Building 29. In the course of adjusting a few trivial grievances, I found that no overtime had been paid since the building had been completed two years previously. Time and one-half for all overtime hours for two years or more! We won that first really important case. After that came a \$.15/hr. raise for everyone in the test department to bring their pay into line with the assemblers and others. I learned a lot. I do not wish to leave the impression that all this success was due to my action alone. Thousands were involved throughout GE. I also learned that my brothers and sisters in labour expected me to take their grievances to the company ... as long they did not have to be involved. I soon set that straight and refused grievances until they were written up by the person involved and signed.

Between 1948 and 1952 there were three strike actions involving the entire River Works as well as West Lynn Works and the soon to shut down Allerton Street plant. As a matter of course, I was deeply involved in all of these actions undoubtedly monitored by the company and their alleged Security people.

With several successful wage increase cases, as well as safety cases we had won, I was trusted by the men in Building 29, Aircraft Gas-Turbine Division. Our first strike was a national United Electrical Workers supported action and we won several concessions from the company. We should remember that, prior to 1945, the union was very much in the company's pocket for two principal reasons: firstly, there had been only an association of employees prior to certification of the United Electrical Workers of America; secondly, during and just after WW2 for patriotic reasons, the union policy of "No strike during war time" had no doubt arisen out of the Stalinist leadership of the UE and perhaps continued for a short period after the war. It is my belief that the workers were very much aware of GE's enormous profits during WW2 and wished for some of the profit, having been on somewhat short rations.

For at least a large part of every day during a strike, I was in charge of the picket office just up the street from the main gate of the River Works. Although all of the men were on strike, the foremen and supervisors remained at all three plants in Lynn as well as the plant in Everett, Massachusetts. We in the union decided it would be to our best interests to either get these people out or bottle them up within the plants. Although we failed in the first, we succeeded eminently in the second tactic. Foremen and supers were locked into the plants and could get neither in nor out. I believe we allowed a skeleton crew of our own people to remain in the plants to assure the power systems, which required continuous operation and maintenance.

The Pines River ran right alongside the River Works. The inside staff managed to land one load of food under cover of darkness. We then organized the Pines River

Auxiliary Navy to patrol the river twenty-four hours/day. Local newspapers reported that "Pirates have been seen on the Pines River." It also happened that several of the men were members of a local Flying Club. They proposed to do a fly-over and drop several thousand leaflets inside the River Works. Both of these ploys worked to our advantage. Lynn was a union town and there was far more amusement in the actions than anger.

I recall another event not long after we had won the strike. The local union leadership asked for a walk-out. Since we had just returned to work after striking for fourteen weeks, I was unsure of the response. I called a meeting by polling everyone on assembly and informed them of the local's request. I also told them: "At noon I will walk out of the plant. Anyone wishing to follow is welcome to do so. We will find out what the local wishes."

At 12:00 o'clock I walked down the center aisle of Building 29, looking neither to right or to left. Imagine my surprise upon reaching the gate that, to a man, everyone had followed. This image too was not lost on management.

I counted the men's action at least as important as any raise I had obtained. Not that they had followed me, but that they had become conscious enough to make a decision on their own. I must admit, though, that decisions involving safety violations were at least as important as wages. All during WW2 there was a complete ignorance of the handling of mercury, carbon tetrachloride, trichlorethylene (Triad), and acetone, to mention only a few of the poisons which affect many former GE workers today. "We need not worry about this shit. We have a war to win."

In fact, an entire new style was emerging in the United States, as corporations became more powerful and more powerfully involved in politics as corporations. Prior to WW1 the battle was mainly between the employer as boss and the work force. While it was true that the great union organizing drives had borne fruit in the emergence of unions of the semi-skilled, in contrast to the older unions which were primarily craft unions, it was also true that, through

convergence and take-overs, corporations began to rule the country. In some cases, business realized the value of unions in channelling worker militancy. In other businesses, unions continued to fight. The United Electrical Workers at the end of WW2 had to some extent regained the militancy it had given up during the entente between the Allies and the Soviet Union, an action supported by many union people and their unions, at least by tacit agreement.

It is my opinion, certainly supported by future events, that corporate interests had to negate this militancy. We must be aware that the General Electric is now the third most powerful of American corporations. By 1950 all the pieces were in place and, although the old Committee of Martin Dies was virtually dead, we now had a new congressional committee ready to come on stage as mighty commie hunters. Senator Joseph McCarthy became chairman by default and began to make all sorts of unsubstantiated accusations as well as threats: "I hold here in my hand a list of Communists in the United States State Department." When we realize that many good men had simply supported the behest of their government in supporting the Soviet participation in WW2, the entire thrust of the committee becomes absurd, but the terror was building and thousands were caught in a trap.

Some persons were Communist Party members in Lynn by their own admission and had made no secret of their alliance. As a socialist and close to the Socialist Workers' Party, I was known as a Trotskyist. Previously this name had not been a problem. Sometime between late 1951 and early 1952, I was called to Security in General Electric and questioned. I had spent three years in the Air Force, I had been investigated (I presume) as well as finger-printed, without incident, and gone through similar processes to obtain security clearance for work on what had been security-required work, both on the turbo-supercharger and after the war on several models of the Aircraft Gas turbine. Suddenly I was suspect. Of what? Apparently of being a member of a "subversive organization" named in a *Red*

*Channels* book, an absurd compendium which lumped virtually every group to the left and to the right(!) current or deceased in the country. There were a few exemptions; such as, the American Legion. There certainly had been a big change in the country we had all supported during WW2. As a security risk, I could no longer work in my old job.

Following my interview with security, I went immediately to the offices of Local 201 of the IUE. The union earlier had voted to break away from the 'Communist-led United Electrical Workers of America (UE)' and join a new union, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), that was predominantly led by members of the Catholic Workers Union, which was mentored by Father Rice of Philadelphia. Nearly all of the executive committee and most of the leadership of the old UE immediately became holier than shit and members of the IUE. The position of Socialist union members was that joining the IUE was a divisive tactic. However, since the majority of workers came into the IUE, socialist workers had no choice but to become a part of the new union. It was amazing how the union bureaucrats, nurtured by the Communist Party-led United Electrical Workers of America, became so holy—and so quickly fitted into the new regime.

Truthfully, therefore, I only half-expected support from the officials. They wanted to play footsie with the company and were quite willing that not only would all the Commies be kicked out of the company, but all the Socialists and anyone else they could finger. The officials of the union were completely under the control of the Catholic Action group led by James Carey who was more than happy to be influenced by Father Rice of Philadelphia. (At least, this was my perception.)

While the local did not get my job returned to me, it did obtain for me a job in a non-security division: Street Lighting. There I would test street light transformers all day on an assembly line. Quite a come-down but I had a family to support. A few weeks later a United States Marshall came into my work place and handed me a summons to appear

before the Sub-Committee on Internal Security of the United States Senate, headed by Senator Joseph McCarthy. This Senate Sub-Committee on security matters was on a hunt for union militants and many of them were to be found among Communist Party members. These same members who had supported the war effort of the United States and the Soviet Union were now the pariahs in the union movement. I was caught up in this entrapment simply because I was perceived as a danger to 'normal' union business with my insistence on democracy within the union and total participation of the membership rather than simply allowing the "duly elected or chosen officials" of the union to control the activities of the membership. I "could not be trusted," to act in the best interests of the company and the union bureaucrats. This attitude of 'identical interests' has been part and parcel of Catholic Action groups certainly since Pope Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*, May 15, 1891), and "This great labor question cannot be solved except by assuming as a principle that private property must be held sacred and inviolable."

My appearance before the Senate Sub-Committee investigating subversives within the union movement at the Justice Department building in Boston was big news in Lynn. The newspapers carried a photograph of me facing Senator McCarthy. I had my hand cupped to my ear because I could not quite catch what he was saying to me. McCarthy was facing me with HIS hand cupped to his ear. These were actually two separate photographs but they had been printed as one. It was pretty obvious that neither of us could hear the other. Certainly it was obvious that Joe McCarthy had no interest in anything I might say in defense of my union or of my participation in the union struggles against the power of the employer. I availed myself of the 5th Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights which deal with the possibility of self-incrimination. I simply refused to answer any of Senator McCarthy's questions, citing as my reason that "anything I say MIGHT be used in an attempt to incriminate me" (and

through me, my union). This was my answer in chambers and under oath to any and all questions he asked me.

After our meeting which was thoroughly televised, in the public corridor outside the chambers I answered truthfully and fully all questions put to me by reporters. In theory, persons appearing before an Internal Sub-Committee of the US Congress are protected from prosecution in the courts. In fact, its senatorial members are protected from prosecution by its witnesses. My intention was to force the committee to charge me with subversion or anything else they might care to. This, of course, they refused to do since it would reveal that I "was not and never had been a member of the Communist Party," and "had never sought the overthrow of the duly constituted government of the United States of America by means of force and violence." (One of the questions put to me by McCarthy.) The refusal to answer one question "because it MIGHT tend to incriminate me" meant that all questions had to be answered by the same reply, or one could not further avail oneself of the 5th amendment dealing with self-incrimination. At that time it was believed that to use the 5th Amendment and subsequently to answer a single question, ("Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist conspiracy?") would negate the further use of the 5th.

This appearance before the Internal Sub-committee of the Senate changed my life. Despite twelve years' service I was marched out the gate of the General Electric Company and expelled from the union. (I was expelled from the union local of the IUE but was never expelled from either the district or the national union. Someone up there must have liked me!) It also led to vicious telephone calls and to unsigned letters not simply condemning me but of the vilest nature. I received a single letter of support from Lexington, Massachusetts, and that too was unsigned, indicating how deeply people feared the Witch-hunt Committee. My friend T. W. Baker made the most cogent remark: "Wait a while; the chain link fence surrounding the plant will be extended right into our homes."

## 23

### **Social Activist Kaput**

**1952.** I was out of work and without resources. My mother kept us supplied with leftover food from the kitchens of P.C. Hicks, Caterer. Had he known I am sure he would not have approved. He did not offer me any work, even as dishwasher, where I could have remained hidden inside the building. After several weeks I managed to obtain a few dollars from the Veterans' Aid Committee. Had this donation not been the law, I'm sure the committee would not have given me a nickel.

I tried painting houses, but the other workers refused to work with me.

Then I received a call from a man whose name I cannot recall who asked if I wanted to work for him as a carpenter. When I informed him that I was a complete beginner, he said that he understood and would help me as much as he possibly could. I agreed to work for him and then called my old friend John Gardener. John was kind enough to give me a kit of carpenter tools and I began work.

My first job was jacking up a front porch of a house in West Lynn. That went OK and I was given a job in Marblehead installing a front door with fanlight. This process was quite complicated, as I had to cut part of the house to admit the new door and the very wide casing and sidelights. In addition to this, it was necessary to replace a part of the hardwood floor just inside the doorway. I managed to get part of the job accomplished by working slowly and waiting for the boss to arrive and advise me as

to the next move. After I had installed the door and repaired the floor, I began carefully coping around each shingle adjacent to the door casing. The boss came by. "What the hell do you think all of that molding is out in the garage? Don't cut around. Just fill in the empty spaces with the molding."

After one or two other jobs, the boss called me one evening and gave me explicit instructions about working on a house at 1418 Western Avenue in Lynn. "Get there as early as you can and start removing the shingles around the water tap at the side of the house." I arrived there at 07:30 and began ripping off shingles, which had rotted from the side of the house. Around 08:30 the boss came running down the street and informed me that I had the wrong house. "For Christ sake, get those shingles back on. And we will find the proper house." It turned out that he had made a grievous mistake on the house number, which saved my ass.

Next I went to work repairing television sets as well as Kiddie Rides for an odd character named Ruben Valdofsky. Not a bad person, Ruby, just odd.

After working for Ruby, on the Kiddie Rides in Lynn, and one or two other small jobs, on the advice of Miltin Levin, my landlord and friend (?), I went to work for Associated Amusements in Alston/Boston. This job included the repair of all sorts of pinball machines as well as Kiddie Rides, and the occasional movement of a slot machine. The 'slots' were worth their weight in gold, since they were no longer manufactured. The law stated that when the machines were outlawed, they must remain in the room where they were operated and could never be moved. Of course, a bit of money changed hands here and there, and the 'slots' moved from club-to-club. My boss Eddie Raverby and his two brothers ran the entire operation from an office and workshop on Huntington Avenue, Alston, just up the street from the building where I had been inducted in the army in 1943.

There were three major amusement businesses in Boston at that time and all of them were vying for my services. Not

as important as it may sound, since they were also in competition with each other for the services of all of the mechanics and service managers. It was common for salesmen of these companies to approach a variety store owner and offer to repaint the store or put in place new fixtures if the owner would get rid of the current machine of a competitor and place one of the salesman's machines in its stead. To eliminate any fault on the part of the store owner, the salesman might suggest that the store might be burglarized some night and the machine thrown into the street and sorely damaged. Our man could then bring in the new machine, and everyone except the former machine owner would be happy until the next amusement war. Our salesman was a 'preppy' or a dropout and an idiot except at his job, where he could use muscles other than his own.

Just prior to the job with Associated Amusements, I had worked nights at the old Southwick glove factory, now the Strauss Leather dyeing plant, and a very unsafe place to work. We had in a shipment of 'plumped' sheepskins, which required bleaching and preparation for whitening with formaldehyde. It fell to me to do the formalin and I became immediately allergic to the chemical. I just managed to drag myself home and into bed when I lapsed into unconsciousness. A nearby Dr. Nussbaum came to the house, revived and befriended me. I sued the company under Workmen's Compensation law and received enough money to buy a decent vehicle. This was OK for riding around but not large enough to hold a jukebox or a pinball machine. We had recently moved the amusement company from the storefront on Huntington Avenue, Alston, to newer and much larger quarters off Harvard Street. Eddie Raverby offered to buy me a new station wagon and to take over the payments in lieu of a raise in pay as well as to pay all of the service charges. The deal meant that I would be responsible for keeping the vehicle on the road. This was fine with me. The day I received the keys (one friend described it as "tomato soup red") I swore I would not open the hood under any circumstances. I had had enough of old automobiles

and someone else's troubles. I kept my word and could not even tell the garage mechanic where the hood lever was located.

As service manager cum mechanic, I spent much of my time driving around Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, but not New Hampshire. When I asked why, Eddie looked at me rather strangely and said that the territory belonged to another company. I felt this an odd answer since Eddie had not been bothered by scruples in other territories. In addition to the Kiddie Rides, that were diminishing in profit, and the pinball machines, we also had the Rock-ola music machine franchise. This one was really worth money but time-consuming in the installation of the remote coin receivers and menu boxes. A Juke with eight remote boxes did not pay for itself in less than twenty-eight months whereas the pinball machines began paying a profit the day they were brought into a store. When one of these had trouble, we made an immediate trip to repair the damage at any time of day or night. When we arrived to do a repair, the players would stand around to make certain we did not 're-adjust' the machine.

On one occasion I drove Eddie in his car from Boston to Island Pond, Vermont. We drove from afternoon until early the next morning to arrive at the Island Pond Hotel before 07:00. Ralph Moultrip owned the hotel, a pleasant enough man. We discussed fishing and he took me into his cellar to "Show you my favorite fishing hole." Hoisting a trap door in the floor, Ralph showed me where the brook ran right under the hotel and into Island Pond. There was an oil lantern, a large comfortable chair as well as a rack of fishing rods and several bottles of booze. Ralph Moltrup owned an ideal fishing hole. It took me only an hour or so to repair his pinball machine and to replace the records in his Jukebox. Canadian nickels were made of magnetic material and frequently became stuck to the magnet of the coin receiver. I removed the magnet and cured the problem. It was too late to return to Boston. After supper I sat around in the very large and comfortable kitchen talking to several ancient

railroad engineers and trackwalkers. One of them showed me his old 'Wobbly' card. Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was at one time very powerful among railroad workers.

For the first time since I had returned from overseas, I had a job which required considerable travelling. Lori was attending Webacowit Elementary School. Our apartment was new and consisted of two bedrooms upstairs and a combination living room downstairs with a small kitchen and storage area. Sue had little to do in the way of housework and she did not want to go out to work ... or I didn't wish her to. Either way, she had lots of time on her hands. None in her family had ever worked outside the home except to go to work in the shoe shops or tailor shops each morning and return home each evening. Her mother always knew where her husband was at any given time, even when he was out drinking with his paisanos. The only separation between them had been when Sue's father first left Italy and her mother was alone with Sue's sister Anna and her brother Edward. They, even then, had family with them in Chietti, where they had lived for generations. However, I am willing to concede that this separation must have had a tremendous effect upon the family and therefore upon Sue. She was very perturbed at my work on a job that continually took me away from home for periods of up to three days. She was terribly suspicious of every minute I was outside her view and accused me of "playing around with every cunt you could find." None of this was true. I did my work and returned home as soon as possible.

All of the amusement companies in New England had a very large banquet at the Hotel Vendome in Boston to which I was also invited. When I arrived, I received sharp looks from a number of gentlemen near the door who were packing suspiciously large bulges beneath their dinner jackets. Most of the guests appeared to be members of the Boston racketeering crowd ... the Mafia, whatever that is. All the women were huge and dressed in black, with lots of jewelry. All the men were huge, dressed in black with lots

of jewelry. The entire crowd appeared to be a flock of penguins planning take-overs

Eddie R. and his brothers were treated with considerable respect and seated at the head table. As their service manager, I also was treated with considerable respect. The amusement industry is one of the few where the simple mechanic or service person has a real edge. The companies are continually approaching each other's personnel with offers of higher pay and 'benefits'. One of the benefits is protection from disappearing and/or broken limbs.

I often worked with Henry F., the Collector. Henry was a very likable person. We were driving in Boston one day when I asked him about the plugged holes inside his car. Henry explained that, the vehicle had been driven by another person and gotten involved in an "accidental" shooting in the South End (Boston). 'Southeby' was the province of the Irish as the North End was the province of the Italians. (A generation earlier, the North End had been nearly all Jewish). It was common for the wittier crowd among the parishioners to steal an auto from one end of Boston and leave it in another fiefdom. Often the car might be riddled with bullet holes. Henry told me that he had often been offered a .45 calibre automatic as insurance but had always refused to carry a weapon. We stopped at an all-night lunch and Henry introduced me to a smooth-skinned, pale-eyed, rather doughy-faced individual. Later Henry informed me that this person was the "Contract enforcer." Apparently he worked for both sides.

On an earlier trip through the North End, Henry stopped at the gas station at the corner of Hanover Street and Atlantic Avenue. He introduced me to the operator as, "Don, Eddie's Service Manager." The man looked closely at me for rather a long time and then shook hands. After we left, Henry told me, "If you ever get into any trouble here in the North End, do not hesitate to go to that man and tell him about it. I don't care whether it is a simple traffic violation or something real serious. He will steer you to a lawyer and provide you with whatever amount of money you require." (Money is

spread around like water, but one had best use this ‘charity’ for its intended purposes.) It seemed that I was getting far too close to a situation which I did not need. And yet, these people were the salt of the earth ... if one were on their side. If not ....

Soon I was offered a job working for Beacon Music as service manager, installing and repairing electronic organs. I was unsure about accepting the work and asked the advice of Manny Lipman, a friend. Manny advised me that any experience was a good one depending upon how one used it, and that for a worker every experience added to his value as a worker. This seemed like good advice to me but I was still not quite sure. However, I talked it over with Eddie R. He assured me that he would back me on my decision no matter what it was. By this time the ‘tomato soup’ station wagon was nearly paid for, and I would receive enough money from Selig at Beacon Music to complete the payments. I began the job during early October. The weather was reasonably warm, and I began travelling around Massachusetts repairing and installing, as well as tuning, the Conn organs.

During the 1950s the electronic organ had not quite caught up with the leading edge of technology. There were very few Solid-state devices, and nearly all electronic organs consisted of great batteries of vacuum tubes, which were always degrading or burning out. They had to be changed with great frequency and often necessitated a service trip as far away from Boston as Fall River, Massachusetts, away down on Cape Cod. Of course, these calls always came on a Saturday afternoon after organ practice and meant a long drive to change one or ten tubes. Changing the tubes was only a part of the call, since a poor tube also meant a degraded sound. However, the sound generated by the degraded tube was acceptable to the organist who simply made an accommodation.

When I replaced the tubes, I had to retune the organ as well. Although I did an excellent job of retuning, I realized that the result might not be acceptable and therefore had to

slightly 'detune' to some extent to make the sound acceptable to both the organist and the audience. I was in the dark about this for quite a while and felt I was somehow not doing a good job because of all the complaints. Frank Mahler, the head salesman at Beacon Music, explained the situation to me: "Most of these old fart organists are half deaf and do not know how to voice an organ. They simply sit down and bang on the keys. The parishioners are in the same situation. Even though the instrument has sounded sick for years and years, it is acceptable to them. They can't stand changes. So just change the tubes. Fiddle around with the controls. Then leave, and everyone will be happy." Although I did not care much for Frank, he certainly knew his business. He was also a genuine old-time theatre organist, as he proved to me one evening at the Old Stone Church in Cambridge.

At the Old Stone Church I set up an organ for the Christmas Pageant of that year, installing a great bank of speakers pointing vertically at the hard ceiling to the right of the stage as well as several speakers for sound distribution around the church. About the time I had finished, Frank Mahler dropped by to see how the set-up was coming along. He was surprised and pleased to see the speaker arrangement, although a bit uncertain of the result, and wanted to test the acoustics. Frank sat down at the organ ... fiddled with the registers and keys for a minute or so, and then swung into a two-hour concert of all the old silent film background music: *The 1812 Overture*, *The Ride of the Valkyries*, *The William Tell Overture*. Just about every show tune ever written, including *Goodbye, My Darling Nell*. *The Little Match Girl* theme by Charlie Chaplin. Along with the sexton and the reverend, I was entranced.

One other precious story. Called to the Cathedral in South Boston, to retune the organ, I of course sat down and fiddled with the keys. From the side nave in trouped a funeral procession, casket and all. I of course immediately quit, only to be informed by the leading funeral director that I should continue. The procession proceeded and disappeared into the side chapel. Somewhat later, the funeral

director came over to me and said, "Thank you, very much. That was lovely." I appreciated his thanks. I had no idea, what I was doing.

The Beacon Music job did not last. I was discharged soon after the New Year. I found later that the previous service manager was by no means 'previous.' He had simply gone on a holiday to Florida. I was pissed-off and angry. After stewing for a couple of days, Sue and I decided to pack up and drive to Florida to visit Jean Challifour, Sue's niece and her husband, Don. We drove down the coast for several days and stayed at the usual bunch of motels. Jean and Don lived at Eau Galle close to Cape Canaveral (Cape Kennedy) where Don worked for RCA, a major contractor. We remained there for two weeks and then travelled back to Lynn and the project.

At this time I decided to throw caution to the winds and apply for a job of some sort at several of the companies along Route 128, which cut a great high-tech swath around Boston and Cambridge. I made out several resumés and dropped them off. When the various personnel persons asked me to wait, I told them that I had not the time to make out applications. If they wanted to talk to me after reading my resumé, I would return. One resumé dropped at High Voltage Engineering Corp. (HVEC), Burlington, Massachusetts, a company with vast array of new and mostly unoccupied buildings.

## 24

# The High Voltage Engineering Corporation

The day after I had dropped into HVEC, I received a phone call: "Would you like to drop by and see us? We are very interested in your background and experience." I went that afternoon and had a long talk with a pleasant young personnel director. I was completely open with him regarding my background and my firing from GE over refusing to comply with company policy regarding answering the questions of the Senate Sub-Committee. He hired me on the spot as an International Technical Representative. When we walked about the new plant, he asked if I knew anything about the Van der Graaf generator. It just happened I had read and recalled an article describing the device in the *Popular Science* magazine perhaps ten years previously. He seemed satisfied.

The new plant was not quite ready. After I had been signed on, I reported to an old garage off Brattle Street in Cambridge. The company had been operating there for about two years after leaving the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where the Van der Graaf Accelerator had been developed by Dr. Robert Van der Graaf, Dr. John Gale, Dr. John Trump and Dr. Dennis Robinson with a great deal of assistance from many others.

In 1958 High Voltage Engineering Corp. was an excellent workplace. The plant at Burlington, Massachusetts, was so new that the plastic wrappers had hardly been removed from the equipment in the cafeteria. Few of the test cells with their enormously heavy cement block doors on rails had been

completed. Fourteen new men were hired as Test Engineers within two weeks of my employment. For the most part they were ex-GIs with radar experience or persons with electrical experience outside the military. For some unfathomable reason, the personnel manager was fired within the first four months of the opening of the few facility. Perhaps he was perceived to have hired an improper person and it may have been less expensive to fire him than to fire other men.

The only personal contact I had with the FBI was during my employment by HVEC several months after I was hired. I had left work at the usual time and was crossing the parking lot to my car. As I reached for the door, I was accosted by a very large individual in a neat gray suit and wearing black shoes. "Are you Donald H. Morrill?" I said that I was indeed. The person introduced himself by showing me his credentials. He began his questioning by stating that he really was only interested in knowing how I was getting on. This then changed to "Did you know certain persons within the SWP?" My reply was that he and his pals had nearly destroyed my marriage. Had sent my wife to hospital with a recurrence of tuberculosis and in addition had made my infant daughter's life a thing of misery. "Isn't that enough? Must you continue this bullshit of harassing me and interfering with my ability to make a living?" I then told him very loudly and within the hearing of other employees that I knew no more than anyone else with a public library and the local press available to them. I also told him to "Fuck off." Apparently he did not wish an audience, since several people were beginning to drift our way. I warned him that he was on private property where he had no business being without a warrant. He walked rapidly to his car and left. When asked by some of my colleagues what was going on, I simply said that the man was some jerk attempting to collect money from me that I did not owe. At the time I was in utter despair. After going through hell for several years, I finally had a decent job, and it might go down the drain at any minute.

The early days in any new company are rewarding to the persons working there. No hierarchy has developed and hardly any job description has been concretized. If the floors required sweeping, sweep. If work of a 'higher' nature is required, do it. Since the number of personnel is limited, there is less distance between management and other workers in the company. President Dr. Dennis Robinson was usually around. He often came by to talk. I had been away for several weeks and had raised a beard. My boss, Al Bernardi, said I should shave it off. Dennis came by the test cell and noticed my new beard: "Well, Don, I see you've grown a beard. It looks well on you." As he walked on, Al Bernardi remarked: "Shit. I suppose you'll never shave now." There was that sort of attitude. One of the technical engineers was a notorious ass-licker. He asked Dr. John Trump a question. Trump simply walked on and Bob thought that was the end of it. Two days later Dr. Trump came down the corridor with an armload of books: "About your question, Robert." Trump was quite prepared to take the time to explain fully the question the engineer had asked facetiously. Dr. John Gale was a particular in-shop friend whom I will write of later. We often had conversations. I recall remarking that, since we no longer believed space was an empty vacuum, perhaps we could design an engine like an ion drive Athyd to collect micro-meteorites and accelerate them as a means of propulsion. Gale thought this an excellent idea ... He got back to me several days later and said that the Russians were working on some such device. It made me feel good that I had arrived at the same concept independently. We did nothing about it but continued to discuss all sorts of new ideas and developments in science and engineering. There was just that sort of exuberance in the company because of its newness. Most of us Tech. Reps. had little in the way of university training but we had centuries of on the job experience in a wide range of work areas.

The Van der Graaf Accelerator was designed to store a high electric potential on the surface of a polished aluminum

dome at the top of an insulating glass column by means of a rubber and fabric belt that picked off its charge at the base of the machine and delivered the potential as a cascade down a segmented glass vacuum tube, where the electrons would strike a target at the ground end of the tube and generate large potentials of gamma radiation (high energy x-rays) at the target for various uses.

One of the first large contracts was from the Donner Foundation. We were to provide 2.0MEV gamma ray as a means of treating various cancers, especially cervical cancers. These machines were installed in fifteen hospitals throughout the United States and (I believe) Canada. They were sent to such places as Pondville Cancer Hospital in Massachusetts, the Los Angeles Tumor Clinic, and St.Joseph's Infirmary in Louisville, Kentucky. I worked at all of these hospitals including Massachusetts General Hospital, where one of the first machines was installed and operated. There was great urgency to get these machines into use. Later when the Donner contract had been completed, I worked on and installed machines with potentials from 500,000EV to 15,000,000EV before I left the company eight years later. It was company practice to send out two men on a job: one man with considerable experience when this was practical, plus a new man to gain experience. I often went out alone after the first month or so.

The operation of this early machine was not without its risk. One group of three men was looking at the beam end of the machine when, because of some malfunction, it started. It is my understanding that all of these men died horribly in time of radiation sickness and burns. Several years later at the plant itself, when a machine was in operation, an interlock device malfunctioned and we had another very bad accident. I am not convinced that my diabetic condition and prostate cancer are not allied with the accident that I had at the plant. I had been operating a small neutron machine, when I noticed that my radiation badge had fallen to the floor from the clip on my belt where we wore the badges when operating waist-level generators.

Upon development, the badge was found to be literally black, indicating a heavy dose of exposure. Laboratory tests immediately taken did not reveal any diminishment in my cell count. It was assumed that I had not received any radiation but that the badge had fallen from my belt prior to my leaving the test vault and operating the machine. I point out that this event took place in a period when the testing was hardly routine and that no six month follow-up was made.

These were the risks and we accepted them as a part of the job. One evening working on the 15MEV machine, one of the men fell across a very high voltage (low current) transformer feeding an electrostatic lens. I managed to hit the panic button and cut off the power before pulling the man away from the source. We rushed him to the local Burlington Hospital where he was pronounced OK. Despite a quite large burn area on his side, he wanted to return and finish the job. I insisted that we drive him home. I must say that the number of accidents at High Volt was quite small related to the dangers involved. I emphasize the foregoing to reveal the risks involved in simply working in industry and the machismo attitude, which is encouraged. It was far worse during WW2 when we were using and handling chemicals of which we had little knowledge. (PCBs, Acetone, TriChlor- Ethylene and Mercury, among many others.)

Most of the years I spent at HVEC were productive. I certainly learned a great deal more than I would ever have learned at General Electric. Much of the time I was travelling. I felt like a commuter between Boston and Los Angeles. Thinking back on it, I was not called to several jobs on the west coast. These were usually connected with the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory or other Defense Department contracts. At the time I was not at all concerned about this. There was always plenty of work: Los Angeles 'Tumor Clinic had a 2.0 Million Electron Voltes (MEV) Donner machine which they cleverly put to profitable use in the evening after the clinic treatments were finished. California Research

Corp., a subsidiary of Standard Oil operated by Glen Seaborg, was another facility where I worked.

I worked at California Institute of Technology, for over three months and took Sue and Lori on that job with me ... going hopelessly into debt in the process. We lived at the Travel Lodge Motel for three months along with another engineer (Ralph V.) and his wife and baby daughter. Ralph was a Dutch Indonesian, a wily character. One day he told me that he had to go down the coast to Santa Rosa to see his mother and would only be gone a few days. "OK, say I." His wife, Angel, told me that Ralph was going down to Santa Rosa to meet his other wife as well as his mother. The plot began to thicken when I found that Ralph also had a Swedish wife stashed away in a Boston apartment. Being an Indonesian Moslem apparently had its advantages as well as disadvantages. Ralph was a busy young man.

While staying at the motel, one morning I was awakened by the telephone. "Mr. Morrill, is everything all right?" "Why?" "Well, we found your wife's handbag floating in the swimming pool." I reached for my trousers only to find that they, along with my wallet and personal effects, had disappeared. The local sheriff from LA County turned up and informed me that this was not at all unusual and that very often burglars would enter a house ... empty or not ... make an inventory of valuables and leave, not returning until they had an order for a particular item. "And you will never know anyone has been there." This was a chilling statement. I immediately got on the phone, cancelled all of my credit cards and sent an immediate telegram to HVEC informing them that I had been robbed and was broke. Somehow or other there was an office mix-up at Burlington and money began to arrive from the vice-president, comptroller, my boss and the company treasurer. After the amount reached nearly three thousand dollars, I sent telegrams to everyone at the plant asking them to "Shut off the funds. We are drowning in money here."

As well as the Los Angeles area, I worked for several months at the University of Wisconsin at Madison,

University of Pennsylvania Hospital, and the Oncologic Hospital in Philadelphia. Sue was becoming more and more difficult to deal with. My telephone calls home were often greeted with silence and just as often with curses and diatribe. I know it sounds like a cop-out, which it probably is, but I became so distraught at the accusations that I was "fooling around with other women," "Bring whores up to my room." etc. etc., that finally, almost in self-defense (I was tired of defending myself against accusations which had no substance), I met a young woman and brought her to my room for the usual reasons. There was also a much older woman, the mistress of Carl Mohs, the man who owned the Ivy Inn Motels, where I stayed.

What can I say? I was tired of being away from home so much. The life of a technical representative appears to be all glamour and fun: the best hotels, the best restaurants, and meeting all sorts of interesting people at universities. But what do you do when the day is done? In any city in the world there are not more than twenty-five movie theaters presenting different bills on any given evening. There is a limited number of plays, concerts, entertainment of all sorts. One is left with the saloons. Every hotel has its own version of the same saloon in the hotel you just checked out of. As Howard Johnson's and McDonald's are all the same, selling security in the knowledge that their food is neither bad nor good, so are all hotels and hotel saloons copies of each other. After three days and nights of this business, the loneliness sets in. Television, it is true, is a "vast wasteland," with very little content to urge one to greater knowledge. In Houston, Texas, I spent an hour one evening leaning outside my bathroom window, conversing with a prostitute. Much of her conversation was muffled as she had a piece of dental floss slipping through her teeth. She wished me to party with her and I told her I was too tired. "Oh, that's OK. Maybe you're queer." I assured her this was not so. I had to rise to my macho defense.

After the woman left, I tried to get some sleep but sleep was impossible because of the noise in adjacent suites. Earlier

that evening I had bought a 12- pack of beer and intended to drive down through Cameron Parish, Louisiana, on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico. I could not sleep and dropped the beer in my rented car. Despite a heavy fog, I drove at high speed along the shore roads while drinking beer until I was simply too sleepy to continue. Pulling over to the highway shoulder, I fell instantly to sleep, not awakening until the sun rose and shone in my eyes. Now I was desperately hungry. Not far from where I had stopped was a 24-hour truck stop cafe. I must have eaten six scrambled eggs as well as bacon, toast and much coffee before once more driving along the coast.

I stopped at the shore of a very long sandy beach to observe the Cajun fisher folk hauling a net by hand far out in the shallows of the Gulf. The fisher folk, although they were far from shore, had hardly gotten wet in the shallow water ... only up to the waist. In one long line they stretched the net amid the shallows, drawing its ends together as they approached the shore. I could see the fish glistening in the sun as they leaped from the water, and hear the voices of the fisher folk. What a marvelous experience so early in a bright and shining morning. How lucky I was that I had not fallen asleep at the wheel and crashed the car.

Although the experience was both lovely and somewhat peculiar, I thought little of it. I returned to Houston to Rice University, and got on with my job. Somehow, I began to tire easily. It became a real chore in the afternoon to pull myself up the short ladder to the big vacuum pumps. I had to leave frequently to piss and to drink coffee. In the evening I was surprised to learn that I could eat the delicious Gulf fish, shrimp and oysters by the bucketful without becoming too full, or gaining any weight. After three months I returned to HVEC.

As usual, when we had been away for an appreciable period, company policy dictated that each of us should have a complete physical examination. I had mine. The company doctor suggested I see my family doctor because, "There is slight evidence of excess sugar in your blood. This may be

nothing but you should consult your own doctor." I went to see my good friend Dr. Julius Nussbaum. After a quick urine test, Julius made an appointment for me at the Joslin Clinic in Brookline (Boston) where I found, for sure, I was diabetic.

I remained at Joslin for seven full days. Only on the morning of the second day was I affected emotionally. I sat on the edge of my bed and cried ... I believed the situation was hopeless. The Joslin Clinic at that time really attempted to put the fear of God (or Dr. Elliot Joslin) in every patient. We went through seven full days of lectures dealing with every phase of diabetes (except one) and through a complete course in nutrition as it applied to diabetics. They neglected to say anything about sex. However, one afternoon as I was walking down a corridor in Peter Bent-Brigham Hospital to which the clinic is attached, a woman patient came on to me rather strongly. When I simply ignored her, she shouted, "You just wait until you can't get it up anymore. Ha, Ha, Ha."

Fortunately, she was wrong ... or nearly so and I had thirty-five good years ahead of me.

## 25

# Harvard College Department of Physics

After my return to Burlington from Houston, Texas, I was sent to the University of Pennsylvania Hospital to repair and calibrate a 2 Million Electron Volt (MEV) medical accelerator. As usual I talked to anyone that came by the cell where I was working. The nurse in charge of radiation therapy and I had a twenty minute conversation in which she came on pretty strongly and I just ignored her intimation. Finally, she gave up; "Jesus Christ, your wife sure shouldn't have any worries about you fooling around when you are on the road." That was the end of that conversation and others like it. I just wasn't all that interested.

When I was working in Philly, I received a photograph of Lori and realized I did not know my child. I was shocked. When I returned to the plant, I informed Al Bernardi that I would not any longer go away on long trips. Well, there wasn't much I could do at the company level. It seemed best that I quit HVEC. Dr. John Gale approached me and suggested that he call Professor Richard Wilson at Harvard College School of Physics, that perhaps they could make a place for me at the Cyclotron Laboratory.

In the meantime I went fishing, working the lobster run with Jackie Burns on his boat out of Marblehead. The work paid little but it kept me out in the sun and fresh air. Got me up at 05:00 every morning and home around noontime. This was an enjoyable hiatus from more serious employment. I made very little money fishing but I do enjoy the water. On the water there is always some adventure and one must treat

the sea with respect. One morning we went out beyond Satan's Reef and ran into a school of squid. Thousands upon thousands of the delicious morsels. I was acquainted with squid through Portuguese and Italian cooking. We cut the engine and while we drifted through the school, I reached into the water and pulled out a large squid. Taking a big bite of the wriggling beast, I handed it to Jack. He looked as if he was going to be sick but said that if I could "eat the things, he certainly could." He pronounced the squid delicious and not unlike fresh lobster or shrimp. For some reason that season, each lobster trap was covered with sea urchins. When I told Jack that we could eat these if he had a bit of lemon, he didn't believe me but produced a lemon and a spoon from the cabin. We cracked open the urchins, doused them with lemon and scooped out the orange insides. Very tasty.

I never ceased to be amazed that so few people are familiar with all of the food growing around them. We tend to stick to and to be stuck with a very narrow diet. With all the good things of earth, we tend to be locked into an ethnic diet. "What was good enough for my pa is certainly good enough for me." And, "I don't like any of that foreign food." I'm afraid that my grandfather, Herb Weld, was quite that way. At a Chinese restaurant surrounded by all the exotics of the Orient, 'Pop' would order steak and onions with mashed potatoes, peas and, coffee. Apple-pie for dessert ... of course. No salad. None of that rabbit food for him. Of course, today a large percentage of the food we eat may arrive from very far away indeed. East Indian mangos, oranges from Haifa and tomatoes from Mexico. As North America becomes more thoroughly urbanized, an increasing amount of arable land falls to the greed of developers. And often the best land goes first. It is likely all of the topsoil will be removed and sold, all but a thin layer that will be spread around the development houses to give the appearance of soil:

"Building the slums of the future," says Frank Lloyd Wright.

Being at home allowed me to become more acquainted with Lori and (I vainly hoped) closer to Sue. Somehow within this period ... this hiatus from HVEC to Harvard ... I became interested in clay and making pottery. Harold Gordon and Arlene Wattenmaker-Gordon had been living in Lynn on Hanover Circle until they bought a house in Marblehead. Arlene was interested in making pots and had purchased a potter's wheel and other supplies. I was out of work and she had a room in the cellar that could be refurbished and used as a studio. I rebuilt the room for her and, in trying out the potter's wheel, became hooked on the craft. As with most of my pursuits in life, I found that I had to begin at the beginning in making pottery. I re-invented the wheel. Dug local clay. Constructed a very small kiln and began making pots. One thing led to another and I bought a kick wheel from Newton Potters as well as a small kiln. Although I had visited many museums and had viewed hundreds of ancient pots, I knew very little about them.

Here was a whole new learning experience for me where I might use all of the skills I had learned over the years. I think that from the very beginning I felt drawn towards a life where I could have some independence. When I worked with Jack Burns on his lobster boat, I received some of that feeling of independence where one has no one to blame but oneself if things do not go well. If one neglects to arise in the morning, the boss cannot be telephoned and lied to as a means of getting a day off. One will suffer and one's family will suffer but the suffering will be a suffering of honest choice. The independent life allows movement in many directions. Ever since I had begun working for a living, I had been tied to a boss. I was never quite my own man and probably shied away unconsciously from making a personal decision. Always there was the boss to blame. The company to blame. "While both the rich and the poor have the right to go hungry, only the poor exercise that right."

There was, however, still a family to support. Sue was getting more upset over having no income and our using all of our meager savings. I had been given a stock option by

HVEC which turned out to be a bonanza. My fourteen shares of stock went from \$140.00 to over \$1,500.00 within a year. We sold them as well as a few cheap shares we had bought in Grey Electronics and a small company called Texas Instruments (!) We were fortunate in having no outstanding debts. One of the advantages of having been raised during the Great Depression was that one tends to shy away from debt. I expect this attitude may spring from a much deeper fear that no bank would loan money to a worker anyway.

After six weeks I received a call from Harvard College Personnel. "Would you like an appointment to see us, and to see Professor Richard Wilson?" Sure! I went to see Wilson first. We had a long conversation during which Richard Wilson kept hiking up his pants or dredging out his nose. Wilson was a rather small Englishman. Very pleasant. We talked for more than an hour and Wilson asked me what I thought I might do at the Cyclotron Laboratory. After thinking it over, I suggested that I might act as liaison between the faculty, the workers and the graduate students. I had a very broad, albeit shallow, background and this seemed the perfect position for me. We agreed, and Professor Wilson asked when I would like to start. "How about two weeks from today?" "Fine." "When do you want your pay to start?" "How about two weeks back. At the beginning of the month?" OK with him. And so the matter was settled.

I went to work at Harvard but continued to feel that pottery would make an interesting alternative to the work I had been doing for so many years. Being engaged in cancer therapy, albeit at a somewhat divorced level, was depressing. I had many ideas on the subject and few of them had much to do with electronic zapping and the consequent trauma to the human body as well as the psyche.

The Cyclotron Laboratory is at the head of Elliot Street and beyond the Peabody Museums. Just behind the laboratory the sprawling wing of the Bevatron shows as a hump in the ground, planted with radiation sensitive mimosa. In front of the Cyclotron Lab is the engineering building, and just behind the laboratory is the building

where Dr. Tim Leary and Dr. Alford had their offices ... the infamous LSD experiment at Palfrey House.

Entering the front office of the Cyclotron Laboratory, I notified Anne, the secretary, that I would start work on that day. She was unaware of my newly created job but took the news quite calmly. "Go down the corridor, and find yourself an office. There is a vacant room just before the machine shop. If you return here, I can give you the catalogue to the internal stores ... if I can find the damned thing."

I found my office. A nice sunny room, with a large window and, lots of junk to throw out. The catalogue listed all sorts of furniture and office supplies. I ordered desk, chair drawing table, bookcase, and also a small aquarium with lamp and air pump. I wandered about introducing myself to the machine shop crew, the electronic lab crew, and the few students hanging about. I returned to my new office and subscribed to every scientific and engineering journal I could think of, intending to surround myself with such a barrier of books and journals that I would be invisible.

The Cyclotron itself was essentially a huge magnet with a chamber between its poles for the acceleration of hydrogen ions and the production of sixty million electron volt (60 MEV) protons. Outside the Cyclotron room and at some distance was the control board, a twelve foot conglomeration of instruments and dangling wires. While hardly what one could call a 'manufactured object,' it was more truthfully always in process of manufacture.

Invented by Dr. Ernest Lawrence, the 60MEV Cyclotron had, at one time, been at the leading edge of nuclear research. Now to a great extent the machine has been supplanted by very much more powerful machines, including the Bevatron, just down the street. It in turn has been supplanted by the enormous five-mile ring in Texas. (Of course.)

After my tour of the facility I set up my office and went home. It wasn't until the next day that I met Andreas Kohler, who was to be my immediate chief. Andy was a smallish man with a big black beard and a pleasant smile. From the first meeting we got on well together. There was to be no

assignment for me until a new facility had been completed for the treatment of diabetic retinopathies and other ailments mostly allied to cancers. The proton beam from the Cyclotron would be steered by magnets from the Cyclotron Laboratory through the walls and into the new treatment center. Patients would be set up at that point and treated. For diabetic retinopathies, treatment consisted of a large group of x-rays of the skull to establish reference points as close to the pituitary as possible. This gland is situated in the sella turcica, a small boney depression in the interior of the skull. (Placing your forefingers just in front of your ears and tilting them slightly downwards, you will find the sella turcica at the apex formed by the fingers...roughly). After the x-rays were taken, a stereo-tactic framework was put in place on the skull and held firmly by two holes drilled just into the skull, enough to go through the tissue. The proton beam is led through a vacuum tube and steering magnet to the patient and a series of exposures are given at Bragg Peak intensity, the point at which the beam intensity rises and gives up its energy to the pituitary. The patient is also rotated through approximately fifteen positions to eliminate any possibility of burning either exterior of the skull or the brain itself. These discrete exposures insure that the energy is dumped at the proper site, "Bragg Peak Therapy," so-called. Diabetic retinopathies, of course, were not the only treatment given. Acro-megalics were also treated ("How do you know when you are A.M.?" "When, as an adult, your shoes no longer fit," said Dr. Ray Kjelberg, neurological chief of the project.)

I found the work interesting although somewhat depressing at times. My reaction is one of the problems associated with the lack of a 'professional' attitude, which allowed the operator to view the most horrible procedures without turning a hair. All in the name of "helping the patient and increasing our knowledge of the disease for future patients."

Harvard was good for me as well as good to me— no question. My education had been gained through often-cruel

experience and not through formal training. As a result, there were and are great gaps. I have done a tremendous amount of reading. If only a little has remained, I am still ahead of most persons, who seem to forego book learning the instant they leave school. Although I cherish mathematics, my knowledge of math beyond the multiplication tables is practically non-existent. Harvard was good to me. I had a library card and could roam at will through the libraries, the laboratories, and most of all I could wander through the museums picking, choosing, tasting their treasures and making them mine. As it was at the Salem Maritime Museum at Weld Hall, so it was at the Peabody Museums of Harvard...of special interest for me because of the connection with my grandfather H. H. Weld and his uncle, Dr. Weld, of Boston and the Japanese National Museum at Tokyo.

I was left to my own devices for most of the following months, filling in as an operator of the Cyclotron when necessary, but for the most part simply enjoying the tremendous change from HVEC to academia.

These were the 1960s and hardly a week went by without a demonstration of some sort. Opposition to the Vietnam War was in progress as well as a brilliant civil rights movement. One time I was placed in charge of hiring the 'baby-sitters' to be on hand during the night. We did not wish the graduate student experimenters to be alone in the laboratory with its attendant dangers. Somehow I managed to hire a large number of members of the War Resisters' League, 'The Draft Card burners.' While these people were quite wild looking, they were also rather gentle in their approach to life, due, in part, to the funny smell around our dining area. Grass was very popular, and I do not recall anyone's being busted. Our sitters came to work at odd hours of the day or night, as students would arrive after classes or after some shit job down town. They might arrive at 02:00 as likely as at 23:00 or 14:00 hours. I do not recall the names of any of the sitters and I doubt I would wish to even at this late date. So many of them became really straight. I'm sure that several have become as right wing as their

liberal parents. A long time is required to learn these lessons. Many simply fall by the wayside but many also betray everything decent they ever stood for. Assessing their reasons for opposition to the Vietnam War is not easy. Certainly it was rarely political for many young persons; more often than not it was personal and probably an outgrowth of their parents' experiences during WW2 or Korea. Their argument goes somewhat like this: "I lost several years of my life in the service while college kids remained at home. I don't want you to waste your life etc., etc." I am reminded of the remark attributed to Robert Frost: "I was never a radical in my youth for fear of being a conservative in my old age." Certainly I have met a number of persons who fell into this trap ... may it not ever happen to me. If it should occur, I expect someone close to me will set me straight.

The Civil Rights Movement as well as Vietnam protests was of great interest for me and I managed to get away from the laboratory often enough to attend several meetings. I was in Washington both for the Poor People's village and for the Martin Luther King Jr. rally. Perhaps the most inspiring meeting was the Poor People's March on Washington. Hundreds of tents were set up between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. These tents were peaceably occupied by thousands of black persons, mostly from the Deep South. While many of them walked to Washington, some arrived by bus and even by mule-cart. I must admit that I flew to Washington on Northeast Airlines and that I stayed in a hotel. I expect I continue to feel some twinge of guilt. When I was working in Houston, Texas, I met a group of young protestors from New York who had not only driven down in a new, rented automobile but were staying in the same expensive motel as myself. Having gone through a large number of years as a radical when most of my travelling had been accomplished by 'Shank's mare' or hitch-hiking, this new middle-class means of supporting civil rights did puzzle me. I shall never forget the enormous outpouring of marchers in New York

from Central Park to the United Nations Plaza. It was surely one of the largest protest demonstrations in the history of the United States and, as far as I know, not a person was injured nor a shot fired. FBI, police, etc., were all snapping photographs of the marchers from windows and rooftops.

## 26

### Independence, at Last

Around this time when Sue returned to the sanitarium for further treatment, Lori quit school. With my potter's wheel and kiln, I had begun to make pots as a sideline to my regular employment. We are so often bound into the machines available to us. It is skill that counts and the certainty that one is doing the best job possible at the time. My small, low-fired kiln held only four coffee mugs. I could fire it four times each day. Sixteen mugs at \$4.50 each paid for all my materials as well as the rent. I also took students who knew less than I did about clay and potting. They were not easy to find. I rented my first studio in the second story of an old barn on Water Street, Marblehead. I found I had plenty of energy and actually began to make a small amount of money on the side. Three additional students came to me. We learned together. I believe that my relationship with the Potash family began at this time. The five students I now had included Laura and Daniel Potash. Their fees paid the rent and the utilities as well as the clay and glaze materials.

Soon my old barn was not only up for sale but also up for demolition. Today there is a condominium on that historic site. I moved just down the hill to the waterside where I found my second studio, small but adequate, in the basement of a 200 year old house. It was a really lovely place with two large windows facing Marblehead Harbor and a boat landing only a few steps from "Shitting Hill." (In the old days, the practice was to empty the chamber pots out

the window, the contents flowing down the hill to Water Street. Passersby were warned by the cry: "Down bucket.") This sort of ambiance was never difficult to find in the old town. Most of the houses in Marblehead were at least 100 years old. Others had been built by ship carpenters prior to the American Revolution. This new studio rapidly filled with students. I gave out keys to my steady customers to allow free access when I was working in Cambridge.

The basement studio soon became too small to comfortably hold the increasing number of students. Elmer Brown, a local car dealer and real estate owner, owned a very large, very old building on Washington Street in the center of Marblehead. It became the site of my third studio. The second floor was vacant and had been for quite some time. It had been used by the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic). It had one very large lodge meeting room at least 30 ft. x 40 ft., a ceiling 18 feet high and windows across the front and one side to match the height of the ceilings. There was also a kitchen and dining room as well as a separate room that could be used as a bedroom. A toilet and sink but no shower. This entire floor including an unused cellar and a rather strange but unoccupied landing above the second floor, I rented for \$80.00/month including heat and power. Little less than incredible and in the center of the town just across the street from the Old Town Hall built not long after the American Revolution.

When I had occupied the premises for a few months, Elmer asked if I wanted a shower. I agreed but the cramped lavatory had no room. We built a small dressing-room as well as toilet and shower on the landing above the studio and above the second floor toilet. The high ceiling made the addition possible, since the ceiling even on the upper landing was over seven feet high and with a little reconstruction reached into the shallow loft above.

Elmer Brown was an interesting person. Medium height. Thinning hair. Thin body. Always dressed in well-worn overhauls of an ancient design and the same ancient brown soft hat he had worn for many years. Elmer could be seen

on most days peddling around town on his old bicycle. Although Elmer appeared the stereotype of old 'townie,' he had more resources than old clothes and an old bike. Elmer Brown owned the first gasoline station in town. He also owned the first automobile agency. Elmer owned the local bowling alley next to the gas station, and the snack bar. Elmer owned real estate all over town. When he took a vacation, he took it in Florida where he owned land. (Probably Flagler land.) He drove to Florida in his great big old Cadillac. After leaving Marblehead for Fort Lauderdale, Elmer would stop at his place in Rhode Island where it was rumored he owned a movie theater. The following story is further evidence of his wide-ranging interests.

For a time we had lived at Allerton Place, Marblehead. Near our house was a vast wooden hotel owned by a mean person named Vucasavic and his sister, Mercedes. Vucasavic was always having money problems in his hotel, which boasted the largest "free-floating dance floor in New England." His hotel came on the auction block frequently. Somehow he seemed to manage his tardy payments and hold on to the property. It was rumored around town that he slept with Mercedes; probably a tale concocted because he was a foreigner from an exotic land. Sexual goings-on were hardly foreign to Marblehead or to other New England towns. No doubt the racial characteristics of Fijians, Samoans, and Patagonians run through the blood of many New England coastal families.

Once again the hotel went on the block. The morning of the auction, the big automobiles, Buicks, Cadillacs, Mercedes Benzes, Jaguars began arriving and disgorging their cargoes of sleek lawyers from Boston and New York wearing their lawyer coats with velvet collars, each carrying his black thin brief-case.

Just before the bidding began, up comes Elmer Brown on his bicycle wearing his old overhauls, old coat-sweater and ancient fedora. Slung on the handlebars of the bike was an ancient, brown Boston bag. When he entered the lobby of the hotel, he was met by frowns and expressions of disgust

by the congregation of lawyers. This reception didn't faze Elmer a bit. He slumped himself down in a chair, holding onto his Boston bag, as he awaited the beginning of the bidding. The usual opening palaver. And then the bidding began. An opening bid was made of \$60,000 and this quickly rose to \$145,000. The room went pretty quiet because this was a large amount of money and more sacred than a lesser amount. The auctioneer was just about to accept the bid probably agreed upon earlier when Elmer's voice rose to its full-pitched squeak. "149,000 dollars, cash!." There was considerable discussion about accepting the bid in the first place, and it was followed by discussion as to whether it was ethical to accept a full cash bid. After all, in the sacred temples of finance only bits of paper representing real money exchanged hands. To have Elmer Brown offer real, hard cash was not playing the game.

Elmer slowly rose from his chair and slouched to the front of the room. Opening his wrinkled and scarred bag, he began producing packets of bank-notes carefully tied together with bits of old pink ribbon, elastic-bands and string. This act caused even greater consternation since every man there was an actual or potential thief. To see such sums in United States currency made the floor run with nervous sweat. Elmer got the hotel. (Moral: Cash speaks with a louder voice than toilet paper. The foregoing may be apocryphal but it is certainly in character.)

After I moved my studio into Elmer's property on Washington Street, I borrowed \$2,500 and purchased another kick wheel, as well as two additional powered wheels, a much larger kiln, clay, glazes and other materials. This was the largest independent action I had ever taken. As a rule, workers never get out of the rut they occupy in life. Not to be dependent upon a job or a boss was a tremendous change for me and I am sure did not happen all at once but went through a number of steps. The first step had been my discharge from General Electric, which cut me off completely from the life I had known. I was then forced into a number of temporary positions until I had attained the job at High

Voltage. I suppose this history comes under the heading of 'learning the ropes,' something I had not had to do as a worker. Looked at from this view, I should be grateful to Senator Joseph McCarthy and the Sub-Committee on Internal Security of the United States Senate, but I am not.

Perhaps at this point I should straighten out my relationship with Lori and with Sue. After quitting school at age fifteen, Lori remained with Sue for a while until she became involved in a new rock group, Manhattan Transfer, and somewhat later with a new disco place called The Cross Town Bus. This project had just begun to be successful when the parents of one of the men pulled out their capital and, like so many ventures, the Bus went poof. Lori then went to Keillor's Mountain, Pennsylvania, with a young man named Frank. I received a telephone call from her: "Hi, Dad. I'm married." I flew to Keillorsville and stayed with the young people for a few days before hitch-hiking back to the airport in Scranton and returning home.

When I rented the studio on Washington Street, Sue and I were still living together but the relationship was very much strained. Working at Harvard, like many jobs, required that I often work late into the night. This scenario caused the usual strains and suspicions, one of which was true at that time. I kept hoping that somehow the situation could resolve itself. That's me, living in hope. The relationship continued to deteriorate. I spent an increasing amount of time either at the studio or in Cambridge at work.

In Cambridge I got into the situations usual to persons accustomed to a stable life with another person (no matter how miserable it may eventually become). I met a waitress, Masayo, at a small Chinese restaurant. A pleasant enough person but I could not perform with her. Probably because of guilt. At the Harvard laboratory there was another person, Lois, a black woman about thirty years old with a small daughter, Angela. Lois was divorced from a real brute, a small-time boxer with a vicious temper. She had just begun straightening out her life and had an apartment of her own as well as a fairly decent job as keypunch operator at

Harvard. We never dated although we often walked over to the Peabody Museums during lunch hour. I became quite fond of her.

One evening at home I was watching the news when they interrupted the program with a flash: "Lois, a young divorcee, was just shot to death by her estranged husband, Sonny, a boxer from the area, in her apartment in Roxbury. Miss Lois had been entertaining a friend, a former New York policeman, when Sonny burst in and fired two shots, both hitting the young woman. He then shot the policeman but was disarmed." This news was a tremendous shock to me. I had not been involved in violence at quite this level, even during my service days in WW2. I could hardly believe this catastrophe could happen to such a lovely person. The funeral was a few days later. I met Lois's daughter and her mother in their home. Lois looked like a thoroughly waxed doll and bore no resemblance to the Lois I had known.

Although my work at Harvard continued and the studio continued to thrive, conditions at home worsened. I finally could not stomach the consistent accusations and moved into the studio, where I prepared to live the bachelor life unencumbered by women ... unencumbered for a very short time and not because I wished it so. The reason was that Sue decided to give up the house on Jefferson Street where we had been living and moved into the extra room at the studio. This change did not help matters. She moved out to live with a friend after I came back to the studio unexpectedly and found her with a young man from around town. Well, so much for nearly twenty years of marriage. There were many differences between us: Sue came from a very large, close-knit family. I came from a much smaller Yankee family, friendly and loving but believing in individual freedom.

My studio, The Marblehead Anchor Pottery, continued to thrive. My job at Harvard began to diminish. Lyndon Johnson had begun all of the cuts in the Space Program that included a great many measures to protect employees' health. Often I was scraping my salary from several contracts. Bits from the National Institutes of Health. Bits

from NASA. I jointly published several papers on collaborated engineering matters and had to scrape funds from the bottoms of several barrels to complete work. Finally, Andy Kohler, the director and my boss, came to me and said that my job would not last much longer but that I should take my time looking around. "Another job will open up in the Bevatron Laboratory in a few months and you can transfer to that." This prospect did not appeal greatly to me, since it would mean that I would become only a small cog in a very large organization and probably work 9 to 5 on a tight schedule. I had developed the studio almost to the point where it was self-sustaining. My personal pay from my endeavors was not large but enough to eat and pay rent with enough left over for materials. I left Harvard. This was another example of decision-making, my independence from an industrial worker's psychology, a tremendous decision to cut loose.

Although the period of the 1960s may have been difficult for many younger persons, it presented no great difficulties for me. I made no great amount of money. Despite my protestations that I needed little, perhaps I was simply ignorant of money making. Looking back upon my experience in India and my reading, I recall seriously thinking of ordering my life in somewhat of a traditional Asian role: twenty years of growing and education, twenty years of family life and twenty years of wandering. Although it did not work out quite that way, I believe I was serious.

At Marblehead Anchor Pottery I had all the students I could wish for. I had enough demonstration and lecture dates at the public schools. For quite some time I was employed by Dr. Sheldon Zigglebaum in the Psychiatric Clinic of the J. B. Thomas Hospital in Peabody where I taught crafts to patients and talked with them. If I have any regrets about that job, they are the result of a single event: I had brought a large jar of soap bubble mixture and several bubble rings to the clinic, feeling that this little slide into childhood regression would be good for the patients. The head nurse

took umbrage and in no uncertain terms bade me remove the "toys." " We do not wish them to regress. We are attempting to bring them back into the real world." I did not fight her on this point, but I still think I was correct in assuming that a little bit of 'normal' regression as a jumping-off point is good for anyone, and especially good for people living in a fantasy world of their own construction with a great deal of 'help' from family and 'friends.'

At about this time Dr. Jack Weltner suggested I might be interested in submitting designs for a craft center in several hospitals, including Lynn hospital, where centers would be set up along the lines of J. B. Thomas Hospital, Peabody. Although I thought I had left all of this striving behind me, ego took over and I could see visions of wealth in front of my eyes.

One evening a young hippie woman from far away came to my studio. When she left the next morning, she gave me a copy of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, his love songs about his young wife who had died. I was impressed by that book: "I thought my little journey come to its end, that the time had come for me to hide myself away in some remote corner of the temple. But I find thy will has no end in me."

*Kim*, my favorite book (even now), says something about "... going forth on the highway without aim. Without destination." After wedging many small balls of clay, I sat at my wheel and began to throw rice-bowls. After awhile, the bowls began to spring from my hand as I watched, each bowl perfect, until I had used all the clay. Jumping from the wheel, I recalled the adjuration of Krishnamurti to a young physicist who had expressed dissatisfaction with his life and wanted to know how he could change it. "Why, young man, the answer is very simple ... DO IT, young man. DO IT." I do not believe I have ever heard better advice. When we become dissatisfied with our lives, all around us are infected and dissatisfied with their lives. We are doing none a favor by remaining and compounding the illness. This philosophy also reminded me of Wilhelm Rajk's book *The Emotional*

*Plague* in which he writes that all of us are affected by each other's illness and the illness becomes compounded to infect a world.

Thoroughly infected by the attitudes of persons much younger than myself, I must have been well on my way to Asia but needed a small push in the right direction. This push came about with the arrival of Patricia Herbrandtson, a woman in her 20s and a researcher at the Salem Maritime Museum. Pat was interested in pottery from her viewpoint as an anthropologist. She was interested in re-assembling pots from shards ... of which the museum must have had millions. After Pat and I were together for a few weeks, she announced that she was going to Japan, to Kumamoto, to take a job as an English teacher at the YWCA. Pat was no doubt a brilliant student at university. She spoke English, German, French, and Mandarin Chinese and had no doubt that she could easily learn Japanese. I was very fond of her and probably felt that the relationship might develop beyond a mere tumble in the hay. When she announced she was leaving, she remarked that several boats went to Japan from Los Angeles at a reasonable cost. I explored this possibility and found that the *Argentina Maru* would sail within a month or so from LA. The fare was quite reasonable. At that time, I believe it was \$450.00 from Wilmington, Port of Los Angeles, to Yokohama, and another \$10.00 to remain aboard and continue on to Nagoya and finally to Kobe.

A young man named Phillip White had come to learn potting from me only a few weeks previously and appeared interested in buying me out. I leapt at the chance and also borrowed \$3000.00 from the Marblehead Fishermen's Grand Bank. I had solved all of my money problems until I had to pay it back at which point I would be long-gone on this first visit to Japan. (I hasten to add—all debts were paid before leaving for Japan the second time.) My intention was to visit with Pat in Japan but not to remain there, as far as I knew. I left Phil White to close up the studio and we would drive west together. Phil had been living in Los Angeles the previous year and wanted to collect some of his personal

belongings left there with his room-mate. He had an old VW van in fair shape. We left for Wilmington ... the Port from where I had embarked for Southeast Asia in 1944.

We believed the trip would be uneventful (oh, innocents abroad) and went south through New York, angling upward into Ohio and attempting to remain below the snow belt although it was a bit too early to worry. By the time we got into Texas, we were beginning to tire. Spelling each other, we had driven over eighteen hours each day. We stopped for supper in Abilene. We received a few weird looks as we entered the diner but thought nothing of it. Beards and long hair had not quite reached Texas in 1969. After a greasy supper we left town and proceeded to the highway where we drove for an hour then pulled over and went to sleep.

BAM. Something hit the side of the VW Van as a big truck roared by. We were so lost in sleep, we barely noticed. Upon wakening in the early dawn to piss, I stepped outside. In the side of the bus, just below where my curly head had rested, was a great circle of bird shot dents. I yelled and Phil came tumbling out to stand trembling beside me. With hardly a word we got into the VW and drove to get beyond Texas as quickly as possible. We knew when we were not wanted.

Much less than five days from Marblehead, we pulled into Los Angeles and stopped at a sleazy motel where we were informed by our next door neighbor, "Hey, that room you got's where a guy got murdered two nites 'go.'" We were tired and the room appeared passably clean. No blood and no visible bullet holes. Next morning I contacted the shipping agent and was told that departure of the *Argentina Maru* had been delayed for three days. The agent paid for the cheap motel and my meals. Phil White left to do his business and I did not see him again for several years.

It seemed so strange to enter the docking shed. To see the great white side of the ship. The bustle of arriving passengers and the smell of old wet wood. The smell of the sea and the cries of gulls going about their seining of the garbage. I had been here before. The very dock where I had

marched in as a scared soldier in 1944. And now twenty-five years later, I was a nervous civilian starting out on a long sea voyage again. But this time as a free man.

## 27

### The Lady in Black

I suppose my first experience with things Japanese was at the boat shed. To date, Masayo was the only Japanese I had met except for the poor, miserable skinny prisoners of war we had collected from Burma and dumped in India. In contrast, nearly all of these people were well dressed and quite old. They certainly appeared harmless. Among them were a few younger persons. One young woman seemed interesting. She was small and dressed in black: black coat, black stocking, black shoes, and a round, shiny black hat. She was very quiet.

Note: Isao tells me that she did not have black stockings. After more than 30 years, I refuse to give up my original picture.

Up the gangway to be assigned to my stateroom. To find my way through the ships bowels, deep below. They seemed as deep as that first voyage. My stateroom, if one could call it that, was very small. I was to share it with Ken, a young Japanese fellow returning to Japan after a year and a half travelling in Europe and South America. On the *Argentina* I found this not unusual at all. A few young persons had been studying. Two young women had been living with American religious people. Two young American men were mission students going to Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, to take up a teaching post. Mark Murmelstein from Brooklyn, New York was also taking a post as teacher in Kyoto. Of the young woman in black I knew nothing at all.

We weighed anchor and made our way through the harbor traffic and out into the Pacific on our way to Honolulu, Hawaii. That evening we all dined family-style. Nearly all of my table-mates were Japanese. We were all at a loss to speak to one another. My muteness stemmed from my embarrassment at not being able to speak Japanese and too shy to attempt speech. I imagine this was shared all around. Whatever had happened to the lady in black?

I learned that a large number of Japanese were returning to Japan from Brazil. The older of these had left Japan during the late 1920s or early 30s because their local communities where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries were poverty-stricken. They had been given the 'opportunity' of beginning a new life in South America. These persons were in their 60s and 70s, even older. There was also a scattering of younger Japanese couples with their young children. All were returning to Japan ... a Japan which had changed drastically during the interim period.

Only a few years back, Japan had been through a violent war, a war of greater violence than any previous conflict. I write: "A few years back" because, in a country which had known stability for more than a century, twenty-three years were hardly an eye blink. True, since the 1920s the Japanese people had been under an imperial government as well as a military government and had been involved in China, Burma, and Indonesia with conventional weapons, but for the first time in Japanese history (according to legend, the Mongolian fleet had been defeated by the "Rise of a great and divine wind," the tsunami in 1281 'Kooan-no-eki.') I believe WW2 was the single defeat the Japanese had suffered in their long history.

Much more recently the American "terror bomb," the atomic bomb had virtually destroyed two Japanese cities, Nagasaki and Hiroshima with an incredibly large loss of life as well as the future effects of nuclear radiation. By 1969 these effects would destroy thousands more Japanese citizens. When I had been in India, the 'bomb' meant little more to us than that we might return home soon. Only

within the next two years would I begin to gain some understanding of the true devastation.

Ha, ha, three young Japanese ladies, sitting on the same bench in the ship's salon: Chieko, Yasuko and ... Isao Sanami. By destiny (?) to become "Light of my life" as well as my mate for thirty years and the remainder of my life.

Chieko and Yasuko had been sponsored by some Christian church organization to study in the US although not in the same place. Isao Sanami had gotten the *Argentina Maru* at LA after coming down the coast from Vancouver, British Columbia, where she had been extending her studies in French, which she had first learned in Japan at the Institut Franco-Japanais de Tokyo. The three young women were pleasant company and would for a time be quite close to Isao and me while we were in Japan. However, soon (cowboy style) I would cut Isao-san from the herd and hold long and halting conversations with her beneath the bridge overhang on the forward deck.

Either the second or third day out of Wilmington, we landed at Honolulu where we would remain for about twelve hours before proceeding across the vast Pacific Ocean. After I had changed US currency for Japanese yen, Ken, Yasuko, Isao and I remained close to shore on the main highway and began hitch-hiking out to one of the incredible black sand beaches where we played about before returning to the ship.

My feelings about Hawaii were very much mixed. Certainly, much of what we observed was quite beautiful. I would like to see it again and to spend time away from what has become a colorful Hollywood stage set. I had the uneasy feeling that Honolulu was a vast military encampment floating on the ocean and going nowhere. Every second person seemed to have some attachment to military life, and all of this 'sandwich island' was a shop for military stores, a vast Quartermaster Corps.

When we sailed from Honolulu, the ocean was indeed pacific, hardly a disturbed vastness. Before we had left Hawaii, I had purchased a number of cheap kites, intending

to fly them from the stern of the ship. This idea worked out rather well. We had a number of well-emptied saké bottles. It was the work of only a moment to attach the kite strings to the bottles. After getting the kites into the air and flinging the bottles over the side, we watched the kites in one long line disappear as they soared beyond the horizon. For all we knew, the kites may have remained aloft for days ... possibly for as long as two weeks. We felt this a fitting tribute to the beauty of the sea and sky.

All too soon we landed at Yokohama. Isao and I were separated. I had hardly kissed her (if indeed I had kissed her even once). For the magnificent sum of 2,600 Yen, \$10.00 US, I remained on shipboard and we continued down the Japan Sea to Nagoya and then to Kobe. In spite of attempts by Mark Murmelstein and several other persons to cheer me up, I was very lonely without the young woman in black. If that sounds as mysterious as a dime novel, it pretty much sums up my feelings. I think I had not met another person that felt both so close to me and yet so far away. I determined that this slight shipboard meeting would not be the last time Isao and I were together.

The *Argentina* landed. I came ashore and realized that all of my Japanese language had been learned from *South Pacific* and *Flower Drum Song*: "kon-nichi-wa" and "arigato." Not exactly enough of a language upon which to conquer a New World. Fortunately, I found a cab driver with more English than I had Japanese. He drove me to the proper boat slip and I managed to buy a ticket on the ferry to Beppu on the island of Kyushu. Since several hours were to elapse before ferry time, I walked about the vast waiting-area looking at the sights.

Japan was much different from India. For one thing it was much neater. There seemed a place for everything. Every nut, bolt, plate, pair of shoes, everything, except there was no place plainly marked 'Men's Room.' Taking a chance that the place with the long trough was a men's toilet, I went in and let go before the not so startled eyes of a woman with a dustpan, standing by the wall. She spoke to me and smiled.

I nodded and bowed (proper thing to do), zipped my fly and walked out to be met by two young women walking in. One girl even had a baby on her back. On a closer look, I found the baby was a large lifelike doll.

The ferry arrived, somewhat late. I looked about for something to eat but could find nothing, not realizing that all the colorful boxes were O'Bento, boxes of delicious food. Oh, well. In a way I suppose it fortunate that the ferry for Beppu arrived. Else I might have starved on the platform, and my glorious trip to Japan would never have continued. Never, in India or elsewhere, have I taken a ferry that stank, even before it docked. The smell of vomit was in the air and the 'salary men' were hanging on the rails and leaving their week-end behind in the sea. I learned this activity was normal for weekends in this country where success was everything. Aside from the odor, the ferry was modern and could have been quite comfortable had it not been so crowded.

After searching, I found a corner out of the light rain, where I could crouch in less than a torturous position. I spread out my sleeping bag and looked about me. It was not long before a group of students approached and asked if they could practise their English. I must have worn a sign on my forehead indicating that I spoke English. We began to enjoy our limited conversation and, wonder of wonders, they urged me to join them in eating little crackers: O'sembe. Hey, already I had learned three useful words. After eating and sleeping a bit, despite the rain I decided I would try to walk about on the deck. By this time the ferry was well on its way.

Suddenly I heard: "Don-san, Don-san." On the *Argentina*, I had met a very elderly lady and her husband. 'Doing their patriotic duty,' they had been living in Brazil since 1925 and were returning to the Japan of their youth. So they believed, only to discover in 1969 that the old Japan had disappeared and been replaced by a country in a frantic rush to rebuild after a terrible war. And here they were on the ferry. I felt quite badly for these old people. Even now,

after having been associated with things Japanese, and Japanese people for more than thirty years, I realize my exposition will be clumsy:

Japan was/is an island country, quite small to North Americans, yet the whole world to the Japanese of pre-WW2. An island people can quite easily name villages far distant from their home and have a deep understanding of persons in those villages they have never met. North Americans, on the other hand, because of the vastness of the continent cannot know their neighbors in the next city, let alone those persons living hundreds of miles away.

(I write the foregoing in view of recent events where Afghanistan is also an island ... in time. Have the events of September 11, 2001, brought the American people closer together in their denial?)

The old lady and her husband were very glad to see me as someone (like themselves, perhaps also a newcomer) whom they knew and had known in the very recent past. Although I could not speak Portuguese or Japanese and they could not speak English, we got on well and I found them a place on deck but in shelter, where they could huddle down for the remainder of the trip to Beppu. I never met them again.

At Beppu I managed by some magic process to catch the train for Kumamoto. Perhaps it is the ONLY train between those two points. Still hungry. A nice missionary-type lady gave me two boiled eggs that I devoured. At Kumamoto I made my way to the YWCA after checking in at the Grand Hotel, of which there must be thousands throughout the earth, and finally met Patricia Herbrandtson. While the meeting was cordial enough, my mind was very much on Isao Sanami. Next day I had my first experience of a Ryokan (an inn) and lovely it was. Admittedly I felt 'slippered' to death: on, off, on, off, on, off. Very confusing.

Without too much discussion, one day later I was off to the train, the ferry, Osaka, the plane to Boston, the subway and bus and Marblehead, Massachusetts. From my viewpoint, travelling is about getting from point A to point

B with as little fuss as necessary unless I am travelling only for pleasure. I prefer to start early rather than to arrive late. I immediately got in touch with Phillip White and arranged to stay at the Marblehead studio for a time while I made plans to return to Japan. In the meantime a considerable correspondence took place between Isao Sanami and me. Even at that point, I was pretty much determined, not only to return to Japan, but to return to Isao. And that is the way everything worked out!

I believe it was by January 5th, 1970, that I was back on a flight to Tokyo. I am amazed. When events of great import happen to me, I have almost no memory of an interim period. It is as though I start completely new without any history at all. So ... at this point I must turn to Isao for information and corroboration of events. How did I find myself in Kyoto? Why did I travel the short distance from Kyoto to Arashiyama? How I did get to Osaka? And love is not only a "many splendored thing," it is also a pair of glasses designed to show a pinpoint focus of a New World in the making.

Now I remember: Aboard the *Argentina Maru* I met a young man from the island of Shikoku named Shinsuke Iwamoto. He had asked me to look him up when I got to Japan. That first visit I did not do so. On my second visit I flew directly to Osaka and met Iwamoto-san. He took me in hand and introduced me to the director of the English Language Institute, where I became employed. At the same time, perhaps on the same day, Shinsuke got me a small, one-room apartment at Soné, only a few stops before Osaka Station. I became very quickly settled in and wrote to Isao-san in Tokyo. Isao, Yasuko and Chieko, along with Ken Nakamura, all friends from shipboard, came to Osaka to meet me. We went to San Ban Gai, the monster underground mall in Osaka. I believe Isao and I played "hand and finger tickle" through our entire walkabout in Osaka. The group of our "approvers" returned to their various homes and I began my teaching tasks.

At that time English instructors in Japan were hired in various ways. Certificated instructors often came directly from the universities from which they had graduated and obtained contracts through Japanese companies engaged in the search business. Others were hired through Japanese influence. I was fortunate in having in Japan both a sponsor, Mrs. Saito, whom I did not meet and several Japanese friends, who lent me an aura of respectability. The English Language College was simply a business that hired instructors and gave them a room with table and chairs. I had several female students who were probably aiming to work for a tourist bureau. Later I was fortunate in having a class of four gentlemen: a biologist preparing for a conference in San Francisco, a lawyer, a salesman, and a chemist preparing for a European tour. All very interesting persons.

I noticed one peculiarity within my group. They could not communicate with each other in terms each could understand. Their specialties were very narrow and their university training was extremely intensive. They did not have that breadth found in some American graduates (and increasingly lacking).

I find this to be equally true of today's students. Competition for jobs has become so intense that the entire thrust of schools is to "prepare students for life." But what life? In an expanding economy one may look forward to conquering new lands. Now it appears that we prepare the struggle of super-consumerism. The middle class disappears. Yes! To be replaced with a vast "Lumpen Proletariat" dedicated to being no more than consumers of trade goods, little different from colonized people everywhere.

My teaching duties were not great, perhaps three days a week at Osaka. Soon I would move to Hanazono near Kyoto. I had been offered a job teaching at Hanazono Daigaku, which is a part of a mid-sized complex of Hanazono Zen Buddhist College and dedicated to providing Zen priests of the Rinsai sect, one of the older of Zen sects but not one of the larger. They appear to have been engaged, pre-war, in social-action with an emphasis on Marxist studies. As a result

they were persecuted by the military and many imprisoned. After WW2 the Rinsai Zen began its build-up. Many of the students at Hanazono Daigaku were sons or daughters of fathers holding positions as priest in what amounted to family temples. In general, students were categorized as either Left wing or Right wing. More of that later.

Through several of my new students, I obtained a traditional apartment in an old house not far from the college, enabling me to walk only two blocks through streets with houses certainly older than a century. This really was the position I had wished for. There was not only room for Isao, when she could visit, but also room for a potters wheel as well as small kiln and cooking area. I would save a small fortune. A garden! A lovely, small garden with a fence over which I could look into the street beyond to watch the goings-on of my neighbors.

For the previous two years I had been bothered by kidney stones, one of which I had passed and one which I had had removed in Salem, Massschusetts, by that most ridiculous procedure: the doctor had fallen to his knees in front of a sort of barber chair where I was laid back with my legs spread. After giving me a local anesthetic, he inserted a very long speculum right up into the bladder. A sort of "cherry-picker" device with spreadable prongs like a bolt-retriever. I began to giggle and, despite the discomfort, as the doctor's face loomed up, I began to laugh aloud. "Are you all right, Mr. Morrill?" "Certainly sir, I have never experienced birth before."

Now my kidneys were again at their jolly little circus. I was in pain. Not simply discomfort but more pain that I had previously experienced. I suffered for several days until my friend, Professor Kitagawa took me to a Chinese herbal doctor. He prescribed seven small paper sacks filled with an herbal mixture which I was to cook, steep and drink for several days. Then we would see what might happen before proceeding to the more drastic action of surgery. The pain was somewhat dulled although still much with me. On the seventh day I was in the US Information Center and had an

enormous urge to urinate. And on this day I brought forth a fine stone the size of a large pea. End of story.

My teaching duties were light. Twenty hours per week when I had a full week. I was fortunate to pick up a few dollars editing instruction manuals. They had been translated into English, often by English majors with no mechanical or engineering background, and required extensive reworking before being released to customers. Despite the beauty of English it does not lend itself to poesy.

Strike! Among Japanese students a strike is a sort of 'dance' and rarely lasts more than a few days .... Often only a few hours. I was minding my business of practising English. A student ran into the room and yelled "Sutoraiki." Out we ran. I didn't want to miss this opportunity of seeing Japanese Zen Buddhist students in action. A narrow balcony on this upper floor extended around a ground-level atrium. I could stand here and watch the action below. My students ran down the stairs and joined the milling crowd. Suddenly, the crowd pattern changed to two large groups of students. Those to the left were large and somewhat beefy. To the right stood the slighter group. As I watched the argument and epithets flying back and forth, one of the large students came charging along the balcony ... pushed me aside and grabbed a steel folding chair, which he proceeded to forcibly throw down into the left side crowd. The chair grazed the nose of one student. I grabbed the chair thrower and struck him on the nose.

There was what I took to be an appalled silence for only a moment before a very large monk took charge. He separated the two groups and they dispersed. I thought he had performed quite a courageous act. It was explained to me that the two groups would have separated anyway for fear of faculty repercussions. I assumed this was the end of the trouble. I assumed wrongly.

Shortly, I was called to the office of the director. My interrogation was conducted by two polite policemen and came to nothing more than a slight admonishment.

Not long after the incident a lady from Amherst, Massachusetts, came to visit me. I have no idea where she had obtained my name. Probably went to the college office and spoke to my friend Robert Goto, who sent her to me as the only native English-speaker around.

Frances Cushing Hall wished to speak with me regarding “Your extensive familiarity with Zen Buddhism.” Knowing virtually nothing about the subject, I agreed to talk with Ms. Hall, who was an imposing lady in that Yankee way which brooks no refusal. She had been a professor of chemistry at one of the New England women’s colleges prior to WW1 and after. She was quite elderly. We had our discussion and she invited me to dinner at a restaurant near her hotel, the very restaurant Bernard Leach, the English potter, speaks of in his book, *A Potter’s Book*, which contains several examples of his work and that of Shoji Hamada with whom Leach had worked. (Both men very much alive in 1972.) Frances also revealed to me that the “tramp steamer persons will no longer allow me to travel by sea since they do not carry a physician.”

After we had dined, Ms. Hall invited me to her hotel room. We had considerable discussion about my intentions in Japan, and then, “Don, I have recently received a dividend on some old shares and I would like to share it with you. How much would a potter’s wheel cost?” When I told her “Around \$500.00 US,” she immediately wrote me a cheque. We parted company and, although we corresponded, we only met again several years later when Isao and I drove to her home in Amherst, Massachusetts, and spent a fine afternoon. She accepted a position at an Oregon Museum, where she became a curator and also painted an entire series of watercolors, one of which we still prize.

The wheel arrived from Shimpō and I was put to work. I had begun to make pots at Hanazono as ‘Tebineri’ (finger-pressed) and to fire them in my charcoal hibachi, which served the dual purpose of heating my room. Soon I required a banding wheel that I purchased. This I converted to a Rokuro (potter’s wheel) by forcing a sand-loaded Honda

tire down over the wheel. It had worked very well until Mrs. Hall contributed the money for the Shimpo. I built a small kiln in the garden using bits and pieces from a vacuum cleaner and steel tubing. This we fired with propane. Somewhat later I bought a small gas kiln after a meeting with Dr. Shimizu, who headed an international crafts organization.

Not long after my meeting with Frances Hall, I read an article about Scott and Helen Nearing and recalled that Scott and I had met during 1936 at a presentation of the film *Viva Zapata* at the Community Church in Boston on Huntington Avenue. This was around the beginning of the Civil War in Spain, and there was considerable support in the US below government level for the Republican government in Spain.

I wrote to Scott Nearing and received a fine letter as well as a copy of his book: *The Making of a Radical*. There followed some correspondence in which the Nearings revealed that they were about to embark on a trip to Asia, stopping in Japan. I invited them to Kyoto and, between Professor Kitagawa and me, we set up an informal lecture date at Doshisha University at Amherst House. The lecture was well received, and Helen presented Isao with a lovely silk dress from Thailand. We dined at a famous vegetarian restaurant with the Nearings and several professors from Doshisha.

Several years later Isao and I made the first of our two visits to Harborside in Maine. Although Scott was tired, he joined us for a lunch of their famed 'Horse-Chow,' of raw vegetables and raw oatmeal. I honestly cannot recall our second visit except that they were building the new house down by the seashore.

Later we learned that Scott had passed his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and died a few months later after many goodbyes to friends. A young woman from the *Boston Globe* did quite an extensive piece on Scott's passing. It appears that in the process of collecting her material, Helen took her for a walk along the beach where they came upon a post driven into the sand and surrounded by the skeletal remains of several small animals. The young reporter enquired about the site. Helen

remarked that the bones were of small creatures which had died close by and: "this is where we spread Scott's ashes." I have felt the spot a fitting resting place for a man for whom I had considerable admiration. Although Helen also has passed, they have left a legacy of action which will continue for many years in the encouragement of their ideas in many young persons.

## 28

### Home to Canada

**N**ote: 31 Dec 2001 and very nearly ten years since the prostate irradiation at Vancouver General Hospital. For the most part these have been an interesting ten years and I look forward to tomorrow. Preparing a book is not the easiest chore I have had to perform.

Japan was very good for me. Last night Isao asked if I had been happy there. Well, yes, I was. It gave me a period in which to get started on a whole new life with Isao as well as to listen more closely to others, since much of my previous life had been expressed as a “harangue.” Perhaps I learned to listen to silence. Of course, there were times when we were separated. These were not always the happiest.

I must have walked hundreds of kilometers from one end of Kyoto to the other. From the Kamo-gawa to Arashiyama and from Mt. Hiei to Arashi-yama. A new and exotic land for me. One of which I had little knowledge and yet a strange familiarity. Since I rarely made a travel plan, I never knew where I would end up and therefore was never really lost.

In Paris the situation was considerably different. My background in Lynn, all of the reading I had done. The tremendously varied acquaintances of my childhood made Paris familiar in another way. I believe Isao and I always knew where we were. We were in the Paris of Eugene Sue, Victor Hugo, and his house only steps from our pension. The auras of hundreds of familiar artists were always

floating around us from Montmartre to the Tuilleries. How could one become 'lost'? What was 'lost?' Hieronimus Bosch.

France, Nigeria, India, Mexico. We soaked up those places like sponges. All places, all countries...were both new and old. *Kim* prepared me for India, Diego Rivera for Mexico, and Conrad for Africa, as Poe, Thoreau, and Frost gave me America, along with Stephenson, and many obscure writers and authors. How could one possibly be lost for long in such a "Garden of Earthly Delights"? (Hieronimus Bosch) ...

It might appear that I HAD lost my way here. This is not so but only a slight excursion in another past. Isao came to visit with me as often as she could do so at Hanazono. Or I went up to Tokyo and we moved around that part of Japan. The instructing at Hanazono Daigaku went well enough. I had a number of visitors from the school as well as a few pottery students now that we had a set up. While I would not advise anyone to work with clay and glazes in close proximity to food and sleeping quarters, there are times it may be unavoidable.

I became acquainted with Friends' World College, an international school of Friend's origin with several centers around the globe. This school had a fair enrollment and tendered the degree of B.Sc. One of the students, Burton Cohen of New York City, became a close friend and remains so; Rikio Hashimoto of Kyushu discussed pottery with me and eventually came to work with me as an English student. Burt Cohen and his friend Bobbie Marsh cleaned up an area in my house (that requires a word or two of explanation) and moved in with me.

The house where I lived in Kyoto, Japan, was quite old and occupied by Kosugi-san, the owner, his sister Taeko and their ancient mother. One received the impression that the old lady walked into her kitchen twenty years in the past, took one look around, and left the room never to return. It appeared that the remains of the last supper had remained long enough to foster colonies of maggots. These in turn had eaten all the remains ... become flies and left (apparently

the Kosugi family had been silk merchants in Kyoto in years past).

Early one evening I had heard a scream coming from the O-furo room: "I'm being boiled to death. Help, save me." Yes, it was the old mother. She had been left in the traditional iron 'missionary' pot. Apparently her daughter Taeko-san (a flaky woman) had forgotten her. I went to the rescue of the old mother and helped her bonny body from the pot before she became bone soup. The Kosugi household seemed always to be on the verge of catastrophe. Leading from the kitchen area was a long corridor made to access the rooms on that side. For years every sort of rubbish was simply flung from the rooms to fill this 'ditch' with the detritus of existence. Hundreds of kilos of paper bags, clothing, pottery and, from a more recent past, foamed-plastic containers from quick food shops.

Burt and Bobbie had to get rid of all of this gulch. I have no idea where it landed. Burt built a sleeping-platform high in the room. On New Year's Day, 1972, Burt, Bobbie, Isao and I paid a visit to several monks who were having a small party at the temple Myo-shin-ji. The monks were about halfway out of this illusory world through consumption of whisky, and very much enamored of Bobbie who was "Very big gai-jin." Bobbie Marsh was born in Tokyo and understood the monks to their surprise.

(New Year's Day. 2002. It is now after 0900 and the second disaster has not occurred. Since Bin Laden has not been rooted out by the destructive force of the new Imperialists, attention has been turned to the supposed head of the Taliban, still in hiding.)

"Morrill-san. You have a visitor."

I heard the clump, clump of motorcycle boots and in came Howard Ferguson, daredevil, cycle rider, Honda dealer, and owner of the King's Rook Coffeehouse, Marblehead, Massachusetts, U.S.A. "Howard, and Sandra. What the hell brings you to this Mecca of coffee cafés?" Hugs and kisses, all around. "Honda gave us an all-expense trip to Tokyo. And we thought we'd drop down here and say

hello." We had a fine visit. I took them to the local bath. We talked of events in 'Marblebrains.'

Although we had been somewhat involved back in Marblehead, this was really the first time we'd gotten together. Sandra had been a potting student of mine for a short time. This visit was the beginning of a very long and eventful association between the Fergusons and Isao and me.

Howard and Sandy returned to Tokyo and Marblehead. My life more or less returned to equanimity with the presence of Isao-san as despair came with her absence. After Howard and Sandy left, we corresponded, and Howard offered to pay for my divorce from Sue. The papers were filed and the marriage came to its conclusion.

Isao and I decided that this indecisiveness must come to an end and that we would marry. Like nice proper persons we set up a meeting between Isao-san's brother Yoshio and Professor Hiroshi Kitagawa, who acted as my 'go-between.' (Mah-jen in Mandarin, Nakoodo in Japanese). This process would be an entirely new experience for me. I had to 'learn my lines,' so that I would not insult anyone and especially older brother. Negotiations at this high level took place immediately. We met at Kitagawa's house. All dressed up. My friends in Marblehead Dr. John Weltner and wife Lynda had sent me a presentable suit. Professor Kitagawa averred that he would not take part in this meeting if he thought we would not go through a marriage ceremony and if I were not a fit person with great prospects. Older brother catechized me as well as Isao, and the bond was made. The die was cast and we left Hiroshi to his own family. On the way to the train, the unfamiliar tie about my neck was strangling me. I tore it off. Yoshio did the same and we have been friends ever since. (Incidentally, I DID (I thought) marry his sister.)

Not too long after the portentous meeting, Isao and I took the train to Kobe. There at the US consulate we met Secretary Harris Woods. I believe his family had been involved in US government almost from the time of the

American Revolution. After having a brief conversation and signing a few papers, we left the Consulate. We then went to the Kobé City Office, paid 50 Yen and registered our papers. As we left, I remarked to Isao: "The way is clear. When can we get married?" "But Don, we just got married." I felt somewhat cheated out of some sort of ceremony ... any sort of ceremony. Even the shaking of a rattle by a local shaman or a flash of light in the sky would have sufficed.

Not long after the 'alleged' marriage, we received a letter from Howard Ferguson. "Don, I've bought an old hotel at Meteghan River, Nova Scotia. Perhaps Isao and you might like to take the place over and live there. It is on the main Route #1 highway, north of Yarmouth. It's an old wooden hotel of three storeys with three large rooms on the first floor, six rooms on the second, and room for several more rooms, unfinished, on the third floor." We decided to accept his offer.

We went to Tokyo to arrange for a visa for Isao to accompany me to Essex, Massachusetts. In the US Consulate offices, imagine a vast mahogany desk behind which sat a blustery, red-faced consular officer in all his glory: "Noaw, you-all say you want a visa fo this young lady to accompany yo to the United States of America?" "Yes. We were married recently and have received an offer from a friend in Massachusetts. Since we must be there by a fairly urgent date, we require a visa soon." "Naow, aore yo suah, young lady, this is not a marriage of convenience fo yu to enter the United States of America?" "Yes."

So there you have it. After a few more veiled insults were passed, we received the precious visa "Fo' them United States of America." Back to Kyoto to pack up all our gear in a great big packing-box. Ship it directly to Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, Canada. Buy the tickets and leave.

We spent a few days at Essex, Massachusetts, the birthplace of uncountable Burnhams, including my paternal great-grandmother. While at Essex we drove to a photographic materials superstore and bought all of the equipment for a decent dark-room.

Meteghan River is a wide place in the road at the seaward end of the Meteghan River and in that part of Nova Scotia known as the “French Shore.” For very good reason. The population is nearly all Acadian French. A very warm-hearted people. Being strangers, it was easy for us to love them. After living there for three years, our affection grew deeper.

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# The Old Howard on the French Shore

We said goodbye to our Japanese friends and set sail for the new land, (?) the new land being the French Shore, Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, Canada. The hotel purchased by Howard Ferguson was called by the local people 'the Chicken Coop.' It sat ... or perhaps, squatted directly upon the shore of the Bay of Fundy, quite close to the Meteghan River shipyard and the local post office. Isao and I were completely surrounded by Acadian French, those people deposed by the English to wander about North America, ostensibly because of their "popish affiliations," (read: "French"). The British and French were at war with one another to ascertain, (legalistically, of course) who would control North America, which they had stolen from the native peoples in the first place. My opinion? I believe the removal of the Acadians was an early real estate deal connived at by the then Governor Shirley.

In France, in Brittany, the Acadians had been farmers with that great yearning for land of their own. This land they found in and around the Minas Basin, land not found in the France of the 17th century, where virtually all land belonged either to the Church or the great estates of the nobles. After the 'Diaspora,' when they were deposed by the English, many of the Acadians found their way to Louisiana. Others spread throughout Canada and New England. St. Jean's Parish in Lynn, Massachusetts, became the home of hundreds. With the passage of time, many Acadians found their way back to Nova Scotia although not

to their original home, Grand Pré at the head of the Minas Basin, where they had diked much of the lowlands and built successful farms. Instead they came to a poor and rocky land in Digby County along the northern shore of the Bay of Fundy between Digby and Yarmouth. There were few farms larger than a pocket handkerchief in the area. Those who stayed became fisher folk, packing-house workers or workers in the few sawmills. In the earlier days the mills were driven by waterpower. When we lived at Meteghan River, only one watermill remained. I am informed by Kai that the mill has been rebuilt.

We settled at the old hotel, which became the Old Howard after Boston's famous, or infamous, burlesque theatre. Upon the sad demise of the playhouse, Howard Ferguson had bought the original sign at the theatre auction in Boston. Gypsy Rose Lee and other strippers and comics had passed on. Some to greater glory. (As a younger lad, I had attended services at the Old Howard, considered a rite of passage for the young.) Services at the Old Howard were non-denominational. Over the years many of Boston's finest had attended and/or raided the theatre. Surely, without the original intent, the Old Howard had become an evangelical tent show. With proper ceremony we re-hung the sign. The Chicken Coop became the newer and greater OLD HOWARD.

I wish now to say something of the background history of our new location. Until WW2 ferries had been known to sail into the maw of the growing giant as far as New York. If not on a daily run, surely as a weekly excursion ... Boston also and Portland, Maine, daily. Ferries ran from Yarmouth as well as Halifax and Digby. Considering the physical 'thrust' of Nova Scotia and its isolation from the rest of Canada, the 'Boston states' was the natural destination of thousands of Maritimers looking for work in the burgeoning industries of New England. If there had been enmity during the 18th century, it was forgotten in preference to bread and making some kind of living. If the entire population of the Maritime provinces had remained in Canada from 1640, the

Maritimes would be the most populous part of Canada and Halifax, Nova Scotia, its capital.

In a foolish series of decisions, the Crown had condemned the Maritimes to be the 'Have Not' provinces except for the jobs available at low wages during American wars. Or the re-masting of British ships of war, using the magnificent white pine, now completely gone. To protect British industry, industry in the Maritimes was virtually forbidden in favor of imports from British colonies. Well into the 19th century, "ships of modest size" and acres of dried fish for Barbados were the only industries of Nova Scotia despite the millions of tons of available, low-firing clay in Nova Scotia and the availability of higher-firing clay (North Range, et al). Except for strictly local pottery, little ware was produced in the Maritimes, and the pottery industry had either to await development in Quebec or to import from the New England states, New Jersey, or Britain although L.E. Shaw at Lantz built a thriving brick and drain-pipe factory at Chipman, New Brunswick. [Webster, Donald B. *Early Slip-Decorated Pottery in Canada*. Toronto: Chas. J. Musson, Ltd., 1969.] There was however, a small paper making enterprise at Turkey Mill in 1840. I expect this mill could have been the beginning of paper production in Canada.

Thus Maritime industrial development was stifled and progressed principally as a result of the American Civil War, WW1 and WW2. Even these war periods led to development only to a limited extent and died with the end of hostilities.

However, despite these economic limitation, at Old Howard we were charmed with the beauty of the view of the sea from our broad windows ... until winter and these same windows became coated with wind-driven ice. Even the keyhole in the back door then grew a fine crop of frost. Since the cost of operating the monster steam-heating system was prohibitive, we had the kitchen wood/oil stove, the living room fireplace, and a large woodstove in the second floor hallway which served to prevent ice from forming in our bedrooms.

Since Howard Ferguson was busy with other property he had purchased in Concession on Lower Mill Road, we were left pretty much to our own devices. At least, until the Ferguson girls arrived! Chris, Amy, Suzy, and Laura (in order of appearance and age). Three others, Debbie Bell, Toby Macgregor and Sue Anne were living there when we arrived but soon moved on. Possibly my high-handed position encouraged this change. Perhaps Debbie and Toby simply had other plans. They moved, although not far away.

Isao and I immediately set about building the Bleu Rock Pottery. Our situation was really lovely for building a kiln right at the edge of the sea. As I recall, the kiln had a volume of approximately twenty cubic feet. We fired with heating oil, using the Corona burner we had purchased in Japan. Like many devices developed and used in a country with few natural resources (Japan), the burner was very efficient. The working studio was set up in a front left room of the hotel. This room had a very large window facing the street and provided ideal space to display our wares.

Through our stay at the Old Howard, we were fortunate in attracting a number of paying students: Lori Greenberg from Pennsylvania; Gwen Guile from Vancouver, as well as her friend, Deirdre Allen; Rebecca Fletcher from the Friends' World College. Vincent Ferrini, American poet and friend from Lynn and Gloucester, Massachusetts, was one of our visitors as well as Daniel Potash, a former student and a fine fiddle player from Swampscott, Massachusetts; Dr. Lois Hazen, who gave us the slide-projector we used for many years; and Isao's older brother, Dr. Yoshitomo Sanami, as well as Lori Hinton and her friend, the actress, Pam Jones.

Nearly every Sunday we would go to the Ferguson Farm at Concession to take a great sauna before jumping into the freezing river, and later eat a large pot luck dinner usually prepared by Sandra and others. Often the new location was difficult for Isao, who had limited English skills at that time, as well as for me, a political activist since I was very young. Except for each other, Isao and I had few persons with whom to carry on a discussion of any sort, let alone a political

discussion. In fact, I could speak of just about anything so long as my speechmaking did not involve politics. Of course, I was also ignorant of Canadian politics and found that most of those around me shared the same ignorance. Rene Belliveau from nearby Belliveau's Cove became a close friend. After he moved into the house next to the hotel, I met his brother, who was defiantly political, but his politics were more concerned with Acadian nationalism than world politics and economics. In Clare even nationalist politics was less of a topic than the price of lobster. Except for a few of the younger Acadians, and until government money was available during the Trudeau years, English was, of necessity, the preferred language outside the home and in general commerce.

At the Old Howard, nevertheless, the kiln base, the kiln, and the kiln shack were all successfully completed, and we were making pottery. What more did we really require except for a very large garden to provide food for ourselves and the few hostellers willing to eat with us. A large horse, two young, local men and a plough managed to turn up a considerable expanse of earth just across the street from the Old Howard. Let the garden begin, and it did so.

At the same time I recalled that I had seen vegetables growing in small stones on sand very close to the sea about six feet above the high-tide mark. This occasion seemed worth a try, and try we did, raising fine tomatoes to the point where they budded. In June, however, we had a heavy, short-duration frost which blighted every vine down to the rootstock. At the end of July, all were flourishing again. Several years later in Mexico I happened to see a farmer ploughing the stones along the shore of Lago Chappala, quite successfully. Very little new in this world. Few methods untried.

Our larger garden at Meteghan River was not only successful but was the recipient in the early fall of several tons of sea wrack hauled up from the nearby shore and spread evenly over the land. In this case the early snows covered and flattened the seaweed, making a virtually

impermeable membrane covering the entire planting area. In early spring with the thawing and disappearance of the snows, we were pleased to find that, despite the heavy winds off the Bay of Fundy, the membrane had not only held but had brought forth a fine crop of sand shrimp and other beasties of high protein. Wonderful for the growing vegetables!

One other development gave us great pleasure: We had read of the fisher folk of the Aran Isles setting their 'trot' lines by hand along the rocky shores, baiting the lines at low tide, removing and rebaiting at high tide. Sounded like a good idea to us. We purchased several hundred feet of cod line and several dozen hooks. We found small pieces of pipe as sinkers in lieu of expensive lead. After arranging the line in a tub and baiting the hooks, we carted the entire business down to the shore of the bay at dead low tide. We arranged the line parallel with the shore. Fastening one end to a stake in the sand, driven deeply (a traditional 'dead man'), we uncoiled our baited line and fastened the nether end. After the high tide had once again fallen to a shallow depth, we picked off our fish and rebaited. That year we had no lack of small cod as well as flounder and perch.

These methods, of gardening and of fishing were neither new nor revolutionary. Both were traditional methods throughout the Maritimes, as they were in Europe and elsewhere in more ancient times. What happened to make us forget them? I suggest the following explanation:

The period between 1929 and 1946 was very difficult: firstly because of the Great Depression following 1929 and secondly, because of the period of relative affluence during WW2. The first period, which should probably extend as far back as 1914, brought enormous changes, not only in agricultural and aqua-cultural methods, but in the attitudes of people everywhere in the western world. As an example: prior to WW1, chemical fertilizers were virtually unknown. The growth of munitions manufacturing brought an enormous surplus of ammonium nitrate. Thus an entire industry open to abuse was born. All of the old ways were

forgotten, not in favor of making a better life for the farmer, fisherman and his family, but purely for the profit of the munitions makers. Such practices, and the introduction of steam and, later, gasoline-driven machinery militated for the establishment of larger and larger industrial farms and the consequent diminishment of soils by the use of larger quantities of fertilizers as well as the excessive marketing of herbicides and insecticides.

By the beginning of WW2, not only were the earlier methods discarded, but also as the soil had become increasingly depleted, the net gain had decreased and it was now necessary that all farms and fisheries fall into fewer hands, thereby concentrating wealth. Not only did the soils become depleted but they became no more than sheet-substrates to be annually inoculated with increasingly poisonous substances. I believe no researcher has written more intelligently than Rachel Carson on this subject. *Silent Spring*. published by Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964. And Scott Nearing: *Living the Good Life*. Co-author: Helen K. Nearing. Published by Social Science Institute, Harborside, Maine, USA 04642.

Visitors to the Old Howard were an eclectic bunch and some of them stayed.

I must have been dreaming. No, I heard the wind banging a door. The front door. Banging and banging. Looked at the clock: 02:30. Damn. Couldn't smell smoke. The hotel wasn't on fire. Isao slept. Damn. The battering of the front door continued.

Oh, well. Out of bed and down the stairs. I could still hear the banging but could see no one through the glass in the door. Beyond it I could make out the town taxi. I drew closer and glimpsed the top of a shaggy head weaving back and forth. Anyone that small couldn't be too much of a threat.

Flinging open the door, I stepped back just quickly enough to avoid being hit by a very small man with a very large fist and a breath strong enough to disturb my balance. The little man stumbled into the hallway.

“What do you want?” said I.

“I wannaroom, Iwannaroom. Thisahotel, nit? Wannaroom.”

“Sorry, my friend, we are not operating a hotel.”

Behind the small man I could see the driver of the taxi approaching me. Well, at least I knew the driver as a local.

“Hi. This feller just came off the ore boat up at Weymouth. I guess he’s a little confused. This was home to him but he’s been away for a few years.”

“OK. But we still don’t operate a hotel,” I said. Soon there were apologies all around and the wee drunken man pulled a bankroll out of his jacket pocket and attempted to thrust a fistful of bills at me. Although I insisted I couldn’t take his money for my “trouble,” I was forced to accept it, as he followed me into the kitchen. Finally I told him: “The money will be right here, pinned to the bulletin board and you can pick it up in the morning.” This satisfied the fellow and he left.

I thought we had seen the last of him and that the money would remain forever pinned to the community board. Bright and much too early, the taxi driver arrived with his last night’s passenger sleeping in the back seat. “Hi, Jean Pierre is too embarrassed to see you, but I will pick up his money and give you a receipt.” Which he did forthwith.

Another day we were all sitting around the big kitchen table I had built, eating our supper, when Sue Anne came in and asked if we knew the young man with the ratty-looking dog sleeping out front. “Nope,” says everyone. Just then the big front doors opened and in came a very dirty chap of about eighteen years, followed by a dog appearing of equal age.

The boy did not look well at all. He said he had no money. I asked everyone on the table if he could stay. “Sure,” said Sandi and everyone agreed. We pulled him up to the second floor along with his dog. Gave them a pallet and ... heard nothing more of him for three days. Suzy Ferguson looked in on him from time to time, and he finally appeared among the living.

Another day a scummy-looking young man appeared at our door. Marc. What more, except that he remained and remains and has added at least three persons to the population of Clare County. Marc Graff has become a valued citizen as well as (from 1999) a good friend of Kai's.

One deed, good or bad, leads to another and may have or not great consequences. Here I should mention that I had pinned up a yellow sign reading "It costs us \$ 2.50 a day to live here" on the bulletin board in the kitchen despite the strong opposition of Debbie, Toby and Sue Anne, who apparently felt Howard Ferguson should absorb all costs. The sign applied for everybody that stayed at the Old Howard in order to eat and pay the daily supplies. This sign often evoked the question: "Is this a youth hostel?" And why not? We certainly had plenty of room and could easily expand to the third floor. Somehow we became acquainted with Ray Amero, a very large teddy bear of a man and a member of the staff of the Secretary of State, province of Nova Scotia. Ray became of enormous assistance to us in setting up a hostel structure with a charter and officers. And there we were: The Meteghan River County of Digby Youth Hostel Association, all through the magic of a helpful bureaucracy aching to spend money on the youth of Canada.

Events ARE interconnected. The youth hostel became a member of the Nova Scotia Hostel Association. In turn we built a national organization and had a conference at Toronto. This meeting led to further organization in Ottawa where a carrot was held in front of all us peasants. Money! We were offered money. Yes! IF we relinquished local autonomy we could have another layer of bureaucracy in Ottawa. With an office and everything. Did we? I don't know. We received a small grant for use in the hostel and it was quite welcome. The first conference I attended in Toronto was interesting enough. Everyone appeared to have a lot of questions about becoming a part of the larger national youth hostel organization. I expect most of us were hostellers ourselves and resented the prospect of an additional lever of organization over which we could have little control. I

returned to Meteghan River and to Isao and our friends. Sometime later I was slated to return to Ottawa. I arrived at Halifax to fly out. Waiting around in the airport, I found I was very much dissatisfied with the entire hostel deal ... 'turned around, left the airport and returned to Isao, Meteghan River. Isao became pregnant with Benjamin.

The usual number of months later, on 6 February, 1975, Benjamin Sanami Morrill made his appearance to the sound of trumpets and drums and was about the length of his grandfather's Shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute.) The neighborhood children were thrilled. They never seemed to become tired of coming to the hotel to see him. They loved Isao and Benjamin. Several local girls and boys dropped by to see Benji after school. One day Laura asked if Benji would speak Japanese, since his mother was Japanese. I suppose Laura, childlike, assumed that language was inherited. I made Benji a cradle. We did not realize the hotel was so cold until an elderly lady pointed out that the hospital was so warm. She suggested that we heat a brick, wrap it in flannel, and place it in the cradle with Benji. This we did and Benji spent his first few months either in any number of loving arms or in his cradle with a brick. Once a week for a period of three months, we received shopping bags filled with baby clothes and blankets, including a 100 year-old hand-stitched quilt from local people. Then the delivery of the bags diminished to twice a month.

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## A Long Road to Nigeria

In October of 1975, we received confirmation of acceptance by Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO-SUCO) as volunteer workers under contract to the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperatives of Rivers State, Nigeria. We thought we might obtain our visas in Tokyo, Japan, and visit Isao's family as well. We packed our old Fargo van, for the drive in a big circle through the U.S. on route to Vancouver, British Columbia, our point of departure for Japan.

It was a completely tame and uninspiring journey. Onward from Meteghan River via ferry to Digby. Across the raging waters of the Bay of Fundy, and down to Bar Harbor, Maine. Pushing onward, ever onward, we arrived in Swampscott, Massachusetts, where we visited for a few days with Leola and Max Potash and my mother. Ben Fishman joined us at the Potash house for a few hours. Ben Fishman was surely one of my more important mentors and son of Joseph Fishman, who was one of the sweetest men I have ever been proud to know. This was the first time our Benji had seen his namesake and they both pronounced themselves quite satisfied.

Whoops! After unknown thousands of miles, the brakes on the Fargo gave up. A new brake cylinder was installed and we were on the road again, this time south by west. We stopped for the night with Arlene and Harold Gordon at Warwick, Rhode Island. The Gordons were among the few friends left to me during the Joe McCarthy's witchhunt days.

Arlene had asked me to build a clay studio and Harold had set me up as a knife salesman for Imperial Knives. So they had been instrumental in my becoming a potter for the last forty years.

We thanked them and left for New York City, hoping to see my only two close friends in the city, Rose Mary Mecham and Douglas Richard Gordon. Rose Mary was with *Sports Illustrated* magazine and Douglas was a Broadway and radio actor. Douglas and I had been together during WW2 in California. For a time we had operated the base communications station at Fresno and separated only when I went overseas. Damn! Nobody home.

Drove on to Philadelphia, and found the city closed tight because of a restoration of the Old Town for the coming tricentennial of the American Revolution. At Baltimore, Maryland, we stayed overnight with Charlie Comeau's sister Rose and became sickened with her continuing tales of mugging experiences. We felt we had been culture-shocked enough and left the next morning.

At one campground in either Maryland or Virginia, we found monster puff-ball mushrooms. Slicing one of them into steaks, we fried them in butter, and found them rather tasteless. We also found large bunches of branching mushrooms. Delicious.

On down through Virginia and into North Carolina, we stopped at Seagrove and had some good talk with Verne and Billie Owens at Jugtown, probably the best known potters in North America outside of the university world. They were then represented by agent Nancy Sweezey, who apparently did wonders for them. The Owens family came from several generations of pot-makers in North Carolina and are devoted to their hedgehog kiln, a rather low and broad version of an Anagama. The hedgehog is an interesting variation of early and still used kilns. One of their other kilns had concrete walls on the outside which were held together fore and aft by the use of lally-columns driven into the ground. Cables and turnbuckles prevented the entire

kiln from sliding downhill. We adopted a similar bracing of our New Brunswick kiln several years later.

In Georgia in a heavy rain with violent winds, we were nearly driven from the Smokey Mountains. Beatrice Dolnick, a friend in Swampscott, had given us the address of Charles Counts at Rising Fawn, Georgia. The Rising Fawn Pottery was certainly worth a visit. Charles and his wife, whom we did not meet, invited us to stay at his house for a few days. They were leaving for Haystack Pottery School in Maine the next day. For some reason one of the apprentices must have taken a dislike to us and filled us with a tale of Klu Klux Klan activity in the area. She told us that three crosses had been mounted on the road between Rising Fawn and adjacent Dade county: "a small, crooked cross, a somewhat taller one, and a very tall cross." Were these representing Benji, Isao and me, or was her story simple-minded meanness? We decided we did not need any hassles, and bright and early the following morning we left for Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. (When last in Texas, I had been shot at.)

Through Texas to Arizona, New Mexico and Acoma, which did not appear to have changed appreciably. The top of the mesa at Acoma is one of my favorite places in the world. I stood again in the worn footprints on the Lookout over the desert and felt the hundreds of feet of long departed aboriginal people beneath my own in the deeply worn depressions in the stone. At the bottom of the mesa we stopped to pay our respects to Maria Martinez or her daughter. Stopping also at the local dump, we picked up a few shards which we continue to treasure.

The Petrified Forest certainly was. The Grand Canyon was certainly grand ... too grand for me. I can never get a feel of perspective at the place. It always appears to my eyes as a vast diorama painted on canvas perhaps to be rolled away at sundown by the park rangers. As we looked out over the vastness, a large bus drew into the parking lot. A large German woman stepped to the ground and approached us: "Excuse me. May I take a photograph of

that beautiful Indian child." She was referring to my papoose, Benjamin, on my back in his Snugli. "Shurr," says I. 'Snap' she did and handed Benji a genuine U.S. twenty-five cent piece. Through Death Valley and the Mojave. That most depressing of All-American scenes, the edge of the nuclear test site. "Do not proceed beyond this point. Unexploded bombs." A deadly and wearied landscape.

Northern California and the giant redwood trees; I felt hushed and minuscule before these ancients. Isao felt no more hushed than she would have before a blade of grass ... no more ... no less. Perhaps only another form of 'hushed' before such overwhelming beauty. At that time the redwoods were thought to be ancient, as they indeed are. Later the Bristle-cone pine, that shy pine of the Sierras, was found to be older.

For some strange reason we do not recall going through Oregon. Certainly, having visited Oregon many times since, we do not mean to slight any of it. Perhaps so much of the trip was within our own happiness; the externals didn't seem to matter much.

In Seattle after going through a maze of telephone inquiries, we phoned Lennie Goodman, an old friend from Lynn. Later, the first time we drove south to Seattle from Vancouver and looked for Lennie, we had no luck finding his house until trotting down the street came this handsome iron-grey headed fellow in shorts. Lennie it was!

Vancouver: British Columbia just barely. However, we had a few visits to make before emplaning for Japan. We drove right onto the Vancouver Island ferry to Victoria, where we motored about the remainder of the day. Finally we put up at a small motel near Nanaimo. After a quiet night we caught another ferry from Campbell River and landed at Quadra Island, not a large island. We drove about until we ran out of road at a small hotel where we stopped to gather our wits. A young woman walking in our direction turned out to be Rebecca Fletcher, a former student of ours at Meteghan River, Nova Scotia. Some sort of magnetic field

must draw us all together, since we have had this fortuitous experience several times over the years.

Finally we found the house where Gwen, a former student of ours, and Don were living, tucked into a hillside very close to the sea where masses of blackberry canes, all bearing like mad, made our mouths water with desire. A wild scream! Gwen burst out, followed by Don. We remained with them for a few days, talking, eating, gathering the delicious Chanterelle mushrooms, and devouring the masses of berries and salmon. Gwen we had known as Sheri but now she was Gwen. She continues to pot and both she and Don are teaching.

Rain, rain, rain. Hardly unexpected in the depths of a rain forest. Back to Nanaimo and forward to Vancouver where we stayed at several campgrounds located nearly beneath Lions Gate Bridge. While seeking a more permanent place to live, we became tired of motels and hotels and drove up through the Fraser Valley where we met interesting persons of like pursuits: Holly and Mike Ferretti living near Yarrow: Holly, a weaver, and Mike a stoneware potter and a musician.

We spoke to several potters in that area. We were not greatly impressed. Most were products of university and had little experience. We are not knocking university training. Our contention is that such training operates to provide only technicians and artists with inflated expectations of riches and little dedication to the trade. In this context one notes that the vast majority of trainees do not become potters but find their way into unrelated pursuits. A small number become art teachers. I recall an acquaintance asking his wife, a weaver and university professor, "What will your students do when they graduate?" Her answer was "Almost anything BUT become weavers ... perhaps teachers of weaving." That concept seemed to us rather self-defeating. At best the universities were providing us with future customers, in that sense no different from the future customers provided by primary or secondary schools.

Well, onward and upward, and downwards into the Okanagan Valley, formerly the great fruit-growing region of western Canada, now a mecca for tourists and a retirement area for ex-farmers from Alberta. We drove as far north as Vernon and then returned to Peachland and the studio of a potter. As well as a potter, he was an English teacher in the nearby town of Westbank. We were pleasantly greeted, invited up to his house where we met his wife, and had dinner somewhat later. That evening or the next day, he invited us to come work with him and offered Isao and me the use of his studio and kiln. Although all the foregoing sounded idyllic, we interrupted an argument the next day between man and wife in which she accused him of "never consulting me about anything." We backed off and drove up the valley feeling somewhat depressed.

The next day upon our return we talked with both of them. We told them of our plans to go to Japan while awaiting further instructions from CUSO. We offered to sell them everything we owned for an amount equal to forty percent of the replacement cost on condition that we be able to buy it back on our return from Nigeria for the same price plus a small amount of interest. He agreed and gave us a cheque that included Isao's pearls at one-third of their original cost. We thought this a lovely deal for him. He assured us that many of the objects such as, pots, personal clothing, wheels, etc., would be returned when we returned to British Columbia. After transferring to him the ownership of the van, etc., we went to Vancouver by bus and stayed at the St. Regis Hotel for a week while attempting to make arrangements for money, visas and tickets. Obtaining a visa for Nigeria was no more difficult than one might expect. Obtaining proper shots for immunization, very time-consuming, and time we did not have. It appeared that, while thousands were arriving in Canada, few were leaving. (All to the good. We need population.)

Although we had money in our eastern bank, it was of no use in the west, and each cheque had to be cleared, at least by a phone call, for which we had to pay. At least

through this experience we learned that Canadian banks bear no liability between each other. To call a bank a branch is a complete lie. Finally, we gave up and borrowed a considerable amount of money from a friend back east. Although we sent the cheque in the full amount to the friend, he never cashed it, for which we are certainly grateful. The Bank of Nova Scotia would not even cash our certified cheque without scrutinizing all kinds of I.D.

1975-76. Off to Tokyo. Kuniko, Isao's elder sister, couldn't believe that Isao had returned! For some astronomical figure, we took a cab from the airport at a cost far more than before we had left Japan in 1972. Inflation had hit the fan and the Japanese were covered. The only reason I could fathom for the sensational rise was that trade had fallen off dramatically and Japanese corporations had as dramatically invested in other countries. (Now thirty years later, prices have risen at least 300% higher than they were in 1972.) At the Sanami house we were greeted warmly. A few days later we left for Koisago. Burt Cohen and the Kawais were also surprised we had returned to Japan when the cost of living had increased so much. In addition, few persons immigrating to a new land have either the time or money to make a return trip to the homeland for several years if at all. I understand that Chinese believe the émigré has left the Imperial Kingdom for the land of the Ghosts—the white man—to return only in a box.

We discussed with Burt the possibility that he should leave Japan and come to Canada before he became estranged, not at all an unusual situation for foreigners living in Japan. At that time I believe foreigners could not become citizens of Japan or, at least, it was very difficult. Ten years later changes in the Japanese immigration laws made citizenship possible although still difficult.

We remained at the Kawais' house a day or two checking upon Burt's progress (he has become an excellent potter) before travelling to the home of Isao's younger sister Hiroko, her husband and their son Atsuo, whom we had not previously seen. We also attended an exhibition of the works

of Kawai and his wife, Keiko, who is a very competent potter. Keiko has subsequently visited us several times in Canada and we have become quite close friends. Keiko and Kawai separated not long after our visit at Koisago.

Off to Kyoto and Hanazono Daigaku as well as Myoshin-ji. We had a very pleasant visit with Professor Hiroshi Kitagawa, who had been so kind to me when I was teaching at the college. I had acted as an editor of his translation of *The Tale of the Heike* published by University of Tokyo Press, Vols. 1 and 2, 1975. We met 'Bob' Goto, a friend I had not seen since leaving Kyoto. He was working in the office of the dean at Hanazono College, where his command of English has been of value. Not a great deal had changed at the college except that on the death of Mumon Yamada, administrative changes had prompted the college to erect its own Ryokan (inn) close to where the old offices had been; a very luxurious Ryokan, our quarters for one night before moving on. Professor Kitagawa became a full professor at Ritsumeikan University and was involved in litigation with an American of Japanese ancestry, who apparently has claimed to have done the full translation. We have no idea how that issue was finally resolved.

We paid a short visit to Arashiyama. Since it was on a weekday and not a holiday, Arashiyama was quiet and lovely. Most or all of the Rhesus monkeys that gave the area its fame, had been sold to Yerkes Laboratories of Behavioral Sciences in Texas, presumably for behavioral studies, but I am suspicious as usual, recalling my experiences with the Rhesus and the US Space Program under NASA at Harvard College Cyclotron Laboratory.

At Tsuyama, Sumiko was overcome with surprise when she heard we were coming to see her and Nakase ('Buddy'), a former student at Hanazono Daigaku. Sumiko picked us up at the railroad station and drove us to her family home, where we were treated handsomely. They are certainly Bishoku-ka (the epicure). She and Nakase were waiting to be married. Sumiko's parents have no sons and a rather large business making Kamaboko (a sort of fishpaste on a

stick). Since they have no sons, they will in effect adopt Nakase, who will take his wife's family name, as the business cannot pass to a woman. Sort of weird but Japan continues to operate within feudal law if it benefits the male side.

The day after we arrived, Sumiko and her friend drove us to the home of Rikio Hashimoto at Tsurumi in Bizen-shi. Rikio's family is fine and they have added another boy, Machiyu, to their family. We were awaited and prepared for. One wing of the house where the Hashimotos are living was 'rented' to us for free. Old but lovely, two rooms and kitchen, and share the Ofuro (bath) between us with Rikio's family. Apparently the house is actually owned by the local saké brewer. Everyone was very pleasant and we made friends quickly with the local children. We learned that prices of every commodity were in some cases as much as seventy per cent higher than they had been in 1971.

We remained at Tsurumi for two months. One day we spotted several new high-fired bricks among the old bricks which Rikio was collecting for his own kiln. He told us some of these bricks were given to him in appreciation for working at potters' studios or for firing the kilns. Some of them were also given to him as an indication that he apprenticed such kama (kiln) of masters (national treasure). The potters can tell the origin of the bricks by observing them. Since we could only obtain air-filled white bread, we decided to build an oven with these new bricks to bake our own bread. Fujiko had to run through the entire village to get information about where we could get whole wheat, millet, buckwheat and genmai (brown rice). Her trail led us to the animal feed shops or the farmers' co-op millers. We successfully baked our whole grain bread with Aka-Matsu (red pine) for fuel and passed our skill to Fujiko. Later Fujiko began to sell the bread at the farmers' market under the name of Akamatsu-Bakery.

We were given the privilege of working at the studio of Nanzan-Gama, run by Kei Fujiwara, since Rikio was one of Fujiwara's three apprentices. The studio was cool, clean, shiny and semi-lighted. The sunlight came through the Shoji-

screen. The floorboard, especially the area where the potters sat, was slightly dented and gleaming with history.

We spent much of our time in Japan travelling extensively about the countryside. Each experience brings with it new discoveries and this trip to Japan was no exception. Tsurumi, or more properly, Bizen-shi, is an area of small mountains and many potteries. It was here that we discovered the network of walking roads, in some cases quite ancient and antedating the super-highways. These walking roads are beautifully kept up and meander for hundreds of kilometers throughout Japan. Many of these roads are paved, some with paving stones and others with concrete. One may camp out quietly just about anywhere and travel throughout the country avoiding highways or passing underneath. Up-down-over-around on these narrow roads. Passing through the fields and paddies along the less frequented edges of villages. Roads so rarely used these days that one seldom meets another traveller, and then merely a polite bow and continue on. Although I have never broached the subject, such roads could become quite popular. Perhaps I would prefer they not.

One special day Benji was in his Snugli on my back. With Isao beside me, we set out along the narrow road through Tsurumi and out through the road towards the Heron Sea, and then through an older part of Tsurumi, once inhabited by fisherfolk, now a part of a brick plant. Climbing rapidly above the water upon an eminence, we could see the great suspended highway. We continued downward again and arrived at an old village, Ushi-age, inhabited by the very old and the very young who had not yet left for the great cities and the corporate world. Upwards again, into the mountains. We stopped for a rest and, surprisingly, were offered a ride to the harbor on the shore of the Seto Sea, an area specializing in the culture of oysters as well as a very old pottery we were looking for ... An ancient pottery dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century which had its own special 'crackle' glaze. We bought a kilo of raw oysters packed in a plastic tube and proceeded over narrow trails through Mikan,

orchards (tangerines), through valleys of bamboo, and once more over the mountains to the more modern Tsurumi, where we were living.

Eventually, before we left Bizen-shi, we made an entire set of slides which we donated to the Canadian Crafts Council in Ottawa. Our mail began to catch up with us and we learned we had been nominated by CUSO to travel to Rivers State, Nigeria, as potters, as experts in brick making and in weaving. Certainly, we were not ignorant of these skills. We admit to being somewhat suspicious of attempting to teach these skills to a people who had been honing them for centuries. True, the period of colonialism had encouraged these skills to decline through demands of a market which turned persons into mere field workers under the command of European overseers.

Then began the mad dash to obtain visas, only to learn we could not receive that service in Japan but would have to return immediately to Ottawa for orientation, visas and briefing. Tokyo to Vancouver and Ottawa. We had a complete physical examination and a ten-day briefing, whatever that might be, which taught us little about Nigeria, much about CUSO interior politics, and 'How to get on with the native peoples.' All through this nightmare I had the impression that the principal manipulation was to assist the CUSO people in justifying their jobs.

The foregoing was not an over-reaction. People who have been in the field for any appreciable length of time suffer from a kind of culture shock which never heals. They become out-of-step with the society where they have spent much of their lives. They lose the growth of early contacts which have matured over time. In many cases CUSO persons seem to have gotten out of university right into the field. After remaining on a two-year contract and going on leave, they find all their old contacts dissolved and get reassigned as quickly as possible in order to continue the CUSO life. Is the life chosen by them or are they chosen by the life? Well, the comfortable life is comfortable (even adversity may become comfortable) and eventually becomes

a thing-in-itself. One becomes rootless but one's original society always calls.

Finally, from Ottawa to Montreal, Mirabel Airport, where the BOAC aircraft was held for a repair, and we sat on the tarmac for more than one hour. (I realize, in retrospect, that was nothing compared to the absurd waits of today.) And how strange it is that we can tolerate, without panic, being in a closed aluminium tube. At the mercy of the flight crew, we sit like dummies without complaint on the ground or in the air, awaiting our fate. Finally the pilot gave us the order to disembark, and a rush ensued to get off the plane and on a bus to take us into Montreal to cool our heels through the night and into the next day with little word from BOAC. CUSO had booked contiguous reservations on another flight and this we finally took. Off to Heathrow, England, where we spent the night in an airport motel, leaving it only to take a hire ride around London and finally, after more delay, we emplaned for Lagos.

At Lagos while waiting to go through Customs and Immigration we nearly collapsed from the horrendous heat. We were finally rescued from the mass of rifles and side-arms by Felix, seemingly a Nigerian high-speed racing, taxi driver. He deposited us in Ibadan at the home of Howie Gardener, CUSO officer. We found that Howie was a priest. Although this information did not disturb us greatly, we were somewhat curious. While it is no longer popular to think in such terms, I don't believe the Church has changed much in the past thirty years ... or three centuries. However, Howie was a pleasant enough person and told us that we would be given several weeks of orientation in the field. Within four or five days sans orientation and with only forty percent of a promised medical kit, we flew off to Port Harcourt.

We had been assured that we would not be posted until all was ready in Port Harcourt to receive us. Nothing had been accomplished. Amid continued assurances that all would be ready soon, we spent the next five days as guests of a local Anglican priest named McKay. We were

manipulated into moving into the guesthouse at Alu, a closed military training camp, where we spent the following seven weeks arguing with various bureaucrats. We were not paid until June and then, rather than paying us for April, we were paid for May. We ran low on money while buying household necessities we could not use at Port Harcourt, and we found it necessary to camp in the office of the secretary of finance for three days. During this period we had been in contact with Howie Gardener three times, and once he had driven down to Port Harcourt accompanied by Felix and a Father Sweeney. Supposedly someone had made Wright, the British Senior Technological Advisor, uncomfortable about our situation ... to no avail.

After weeks of promises, during which time we lived at the Alu Training Center Guest House and travelled in the field perhaps five times, we made one final threat and received another promise: "Everything will be ready within five days. House, furniture, transport." We waited ... Nothing!

We moved out of the Training Center, bag and baggage, to the Port Harcourt Crafts Center office. Briggs was shocked. We then went with Briggs to Owhonda's office and finally to the office of the permanent secretary where I continued the argument until I could no longer tolerate the situation. We then drove to the Presidential Hotel, where we took rooms. At the hotel we found that several NGOs had been living there at government expense with their wives, children and servants for several months with no solution by the Nigerian government in sight.

Of course, we were filled with bravado and felt we had little to lose. We felt then, and continue to feel, that we saw little benefit to anyone by corrupting our skills and satisfying a bureaucracy concretized by its previous masters. Colonialism among colonials is an attitude of mind which only a revolutionary change can affect.

After one week, during which time we continued to urge the ministry to live up to its contract with us, we emplaned for Ibadan, but not before repeatedly attempting to contact

Howie Gardener. We were informed that the telephone lines had been cut. Previous to leaving, we had also corresponded with Gardener and explained the situation repeatedly. His reply was that, "We had not shown initiative." How, was never explained. My interpretation was "Don't make waves; simply live out your contracts."

Well, we felt we had showed "initiative." We left Nigeria, feeling we might strike a better blow against colonialism and for human feeling by leaving rather than by attempting to manipulate a moribund, self-serving bureaucracy. Obviously, we do not look with favor on NGOs and do-gooder organizations. Henry Thoreau had it right: Flee from those who would do you good; the good they do is mostly for themselves. And so, off to lick our wounds in Paris.

Mention Paris, France, and one is transformed. The words become a title. A title which immediately erases all other towns and villages named Paris. No insult here. Paris, Maine, is a fine, small town in the wilds of Maine. I discovered a number of other towns and villages named Paris, one with a population of fewer than 300 souls. I prefer to believe that all other Parises were named out of nostalgia, dreams of visits during many wars, or from a book read long ago and impossible to forget.

Passing over an invisible Europe, Isao, Benji and I landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport without a plan in mind except to devour the cité. How fortunate that Isao had studied French at the Institute Franco-Japonais de Tokyo. Certainly, my smattering of French was hardly enough for a café and brioche. (Whatever.) We found an autobus that took us directly to the Gare Du Nord and a kiosk containing several young women of beauty (of course!) eager to be of assistance. They must have assumed that we were with Benjamin, tucked into his Snugli, since all their information was directed to him and we felt ignored. (Whatever.) They directed us to a nearby pension where we found safety and shelter from the moiling crowds. I had not bought my required beret and felt we stood out marked as foreigners. Ha, Ha (In French, a more nasal, "Haw, Haw.") Benji was

no problem. At his young age he looked like every child on earth. It was a useful ploy to have him on my back and to have Isao guarding my front. Does the foregoing sound strange? It was only a few years past that North American Christians (holier than others) had begun to trust people from other countries, and here I was in Paris.

No problems at all. Those rushing Parisians either ignored us or treated us with pushing and shoving on the subway just as in New York or Tokyo. It was only a short walk to our pension. Our pleasantly spacious room had a balcony looking down on the roof-tops and chimney pots with which our reading had made us familiar. Benji fell in love with the bidet, something in which one could clean oneself and, at his size, take a bath. After making ourselves quite comfortable and Benji had nursed, we fell sound asleep, exhausted from a very long day travelling from one world to another quite different.

Sleep meant little and we were too excited to remain in the room for very long. We went walk-about to explore the nearby market we could see from our balcony. How very comfortable we were in Paris with my knowledge of France and Isao's ability with the language. Next morning we walked just up the street to the Place de la Republique, passing the house where Victor Hugo had lived. With hardly any hesitation we walked one block to the Rue Strasbourg and had a fine lunch. Later we found ourselves directly opposite a part of the Sorbonne and just before reaching there, we happened on a street cirque with clowns, acrobats and a horse. Marvel after marvel and all so very familiar to us. I felt my eyes water with tears (or perhaps it was only the taxi exhaust). Perhaps, too, we had not been this happy when we left Lagos. For us France became, as has been said, "The country of all mankind," as we visited the gardens of Luxembourg, walked across the bridges of the Seine near the Louvre, and, perhaps best, marched up Montmartre and sat under a tree eating our lunch and drinking wine. (Although we had given up tobacco upon Isao's pregnancy with Benjamin, our rejection of wine came later.)

## 31

# A Second Interlude in Meteghan River

After meeting with Ben Fishman at Max and Leola Potash's home, in Swampscott, Massachusetts, in order to exhibit Benjamin S. Morrill, we continued on to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, where we spent a short time with Howard Ferguson and gang. Everyone appeared to be well. Marc Graff had recently completed in fieldstone a new, organically acceptable outhouse, perhaps as a companion piece to the one Ernie and Annie Cassidy had made down by the sauna above the river. For our part we collected the brick from our previous kiln at the Old Howard and made tiles from Lantz red clay which we fired and used to clad the Grand Crapper.

We intended to return to Summerland, BC, reclaim our stuff left with the potter in nearby Peachland and accept George Ryga's offer to serve in Summerland as a director of the arts center-to-be which he intended to open. Burt Cohen picked us up at the Vancouver Airport, driving our old (and still favorite) Fargo van, which we had left with the potter in Peachland. In Peachland we picked up Ben's diapers, some of our clothing, and the Scrooge-like ugliness of that potter, which left us both bitter and foolish for a while. It was not a happy episode.

George and Norma Ryga's house was continuing to brave the storms of young and older visitors. Sons Sergei and Campbell Ryga were still in attendance and playing music. Leslie and Burt were together there at that time. However, after talking with Norma and George, we realized there was considerable opposition by the petty local 'movers

and shakers' over purchasing and refurbishing the old nurses' home as an arts center. This was a pity. The center would have been an excellent operation, not only as a pottery school, but also for painting, acting, dance and whatever else might come to mind. The energy was there. Only shortsightedness on the part of the town elders made it impossible. Today, since George's death from stomach cancer, the Ryga Center has become the flourishing place of his dreams.

We decided to remain and see what might transpire. With Burt and Leslie we might be able to build a large kiln. Isao, Benji and I were living in the van under a huge Manitoba maple down in the driveway. George suggested we might build a small house perhaps atop the old swimming pool. This pool had been built half-shouldered from the ground and had sprung a bad leak. What to do but cover the entire pool with a shingled roof and use the place for music practice, for which it later served for several years.

After considerable discussion we began to construct what later became known as La Cassita, a small house half on top of the old pool and half on the ground. The house and covered pool then began to appear like the Old Woman's shoe-house of the nursery rhyme. Quite comfortable, and we made innovations as the work progressed. Leslie found double thickness glass at a greenhouse supplier for a reasonable price, excellent for two very large windows. Although Benji would sleep on the lower level, Isao and I had a sleeping-box reached by ladder over the kitchen area. It was below another sleeping platform and connected with the kitchen area by three steps into the living area and the front door. This lower room was virtually enclosed by a large cedar tree. We built a fine, meandering tile path from the front door through the living room, through the kitchen, and out the rear door. The largest septic tank I have ever seen was constructed of heavy, tar-coated plywood. Measuring 8ft x 4ft x 4ft, it had a double chamber and was sunk into the ground. A very large construction for a small

family. I believe it is still operating. One cannot stint on the really important things!

I have not felt quite comfortable in houses that are finished right to the last window, door and doorbell. There is something terribly wrong when people buy a house as a complete package with little opportunity for future change. Rather than becoming Home, the house is a mere commodity to be bought and sold as the householder seeks a higher status. My belief is that houses should expand or contract with changes in circumstances and family size. Personally-built houses often fill these requirements. They are not bound by local laws usually set by insurance companies and banks.

Meanwhile, the firebricks began to arrive. We cast a good concrete foundation and began to build the kiln. It was to be a version of the downdraft kiln found just about everywhere. It was to be fired using range-oil fed to our remaining Corona oil burner. When fuel is relatively inexpensive, to build a decent kiln is not much of a trick. Prices, however, were beginning to rise quite rapidly; still we opted for the Corona. Any country with few natural resources (oil) tends to invent machinery which is energy efficient. Since Japan had to import all of its oil, the Japanese Corona was a great choice. When we got the kiln operating, we found that our oil usage was considerably below what we had anticipated. For some reason I could not contact the manufacturer to congratulate him. However, to use a single firing source is bad planning. We had a quantity of apple wood available as well as used oil from motorcars. Although we found no need for their use, we felt comforted to know we could switch fuels if necessary.

After our slothful period in Nigeria and the unhappy events of Peachland, BC, we became dynamos of hard work in Summerland. With George we all built the large greenhouse which, I believe, still stands although somewhat in disrepair. Our new kiln worked well enough too, and since there was little rain, it could be left uncovered. New kilns contain vast quantities of water, much of it used in

construction, which must be boiled out by, at the very least, one good, slow firing. The first firing was somewhat under-fired. Subsequent firings improved.

Generally, conditions in Summerland for permanent employment were not the greatest. We attempted to sell pots but had little success, especially since neither Isao nor I am noted as a salesperson. Benji, being quite small and cute (!), had better luck at the business. Leaving Burt to continue Magpie Pottery, we packed our old van with our few remaining belongings and left for Nova Scotia where we again moved into a house at Meteghan River, this time a house owned by friend Richard LeBlanc, one of the crew members of the good ship Bluenose, a model of the schooner found on the obverse of the Canadian ten-cent piece.

We found ourselves in an excellent situation. The house was about 500 meters up from Route 1 on a street called Pig Alley, ironically named for the Place Pigalle in Paris. A commodious house, it had three rooms downstairs as well as three bedrooms upstairs. We liked older houses without ostentation. They were built for large, Acadian families and with our small crew (soon to be enlarged as Isao was pregnant), the place suited us just fine. Like many houses of the area, it had a large, attached barn as well as a large shed at the back at the edge of a cliff leading down to the Meteghan River. We found useful yellow ochre in a small cave by the river edge. It was natural that we should name the pottery The Ochre Mine Pottery. From the journal photographs, I note that we built a very large Shoji (paper-covered screen) to cover the barn opening and give us an excellent light in warm weather.

On April 9, 1978, Kai Winthrop Morrill was born at the same Yarmouth General Hospital as had Benjamin. It seemed that Kai grew with considerable speed to join our conversation and activities; his blue eyes turned to hazel, and his black hair to curly brownish black. At eight months Kai began to talk and at nine months started to walk. (At twenty-four Kai continues to move with the speed of the

hurricane. Both Ben and Kai aver their address is Planet Earth.)

At our new home Isao held several workshops well attended by such persons as Betsy Stuart from Grand Pré, Francis Morris from down near Yarmouth, and other potters. We were a busy bunch as usual, Isao perhaps busiest with the extra care of a new baby and Benji on his way to becoming larger and learning housework (cooking his own breakfast), i.e., "the work and maintenance of the house." Whether one is a garbage collector, as we all are, a physicist or a physician, 99% of our labor is involved with house work. The remaining 1 % may be inspiration, as intuition is a synthesis of all we have experienced in the past. Isao often placed Kai beside her in one of her large vessels when she worked. On a few occasions she had to put back her large vessels in the water, since either Ben or Kai had made several holes in the pots in their process of helping her. We attended every craft fair and meeting with Benji and Kai. We all shared our work. We started a terraced garden on the steep hillside. With old, gray barn boards taken from our previous kiln shack, Benji and I built a lovely teahouse complete with circular window. The studio was up and running. What was most important was that we could remain together as an open family with very little income, and without the demand of the market that we be attracted by the alleged necessities of the market-place. We have struggled to retain this posture, and for the most part I believe we succeeded until the children became mature enough to survive on their own.

I believe Paulette Bergeron (?) came to us with the proposition that we might start a potting facility at the Université Ste. Anne. This suggestion was originally driven by Chester Melanson (?). The situation was suitable: one very large basement room with heat and water. Although the sink drain was below ground level rather than above ground, a small pump would take care of this problem and a plastic bucket would act as a sump to prevent clay and glaze materials from getting into the septic system. There was plenty of 220v power for an electric kiln of fairly large

dimensions. After considerable discussion of our rates and the availability of materials, many of which were upstairs, including a potter's wheel, we agreed after the equipment was moved to the new studio to teach a class every Tuesday.

We made a number of other friends at Meteghan River. Even though we were comparative strangers to the area and not Acadian French, we felt that people opened themselves to us. True, we had similar interests. One friend was René Belliveau, a naturalist who lived next door to the Old Howard during our first residence at Meteghan River. When we returned, René proudly brought us to his new home somewhat up the Meteghan River. He had made the floors from Hak'm tak, the aboriginal name for hemlock, not an easy wood to form into boards and difficult to dry without warping. René had the habit of directing the orchestra while a recording was playing and at the same time carrying on a commentary (as Isao says, "Making it difficult to listen. As it is also Don's habit"). Still, we often listened to music together.

Also among our friends were Yvon Comeau, a musician, Charlie Comeau, a carpenter, and Paul LeBlanc, a social worker, now at Halifax, Nova Scotia. We were happy to be welcomed into a community where love of the English was hardly a trait. Isao's being Japanese and therefore an 'exotic' I'm sure helped a great deal. The local children felt about the birth of Kai as they had done earlier about Benji: "Will he speak Japanese?" As though language were inborn and complete rather than inborn as a generalization. Both Catherine Saulnier and her friend Jennine D'Entremont were entranced with both the boys and often played with them. After Kai had grown and returned to Nova Scotia at Concession, Catherine and her husband became quite close to him.

We were still near the Meteghan River boatyard, although the 'salad' days of WW1 and WW2 were over and only a few of the once hundreds of skilled ships' carpenters and sailmakers were left to carry on the trades. As in so many communities, the young and energetic had left to go "down

to the Boston states" or elsewhere. It was not uncommon in our travels to meet a Maritimer, often yearning for the place where they could not make a living. Now that the Cape Breton Mines are closed after more than a century of operation, the Cape will suffer a similar fate. Reading the *Rural Times* today, I see the editor decries the loss of youth from the farming communities of Canada "because they lack opportunity." As farms grow larger and machines grow more efficient, youth migrate to the cities to make the machines. But what of all the older men thrown from the wheel of progress? Where can they go? Damn few hammer-wielders can be used in the computer industry, where increasing machine efficiency requires fewer workers and many parts are now virtually made by the machines with little human intervention. I continue that, as computers become more sophisticated, they will become more self-healing and require fewer workers either to build or to operate.

On February 8, 1979, we made a firing in the new small kiln in which seventy pieces of pottery were stacked. Opening the kiln on the second day, we found two bean pots broken as well as one large plate, not bad at all for a new kiln. The Corona oil burner had functioned very well. We had started the firing with a small wood fire to dry and warm the kiln load for two hours, then operated the oil-burner at a low level for several hours, boosting the fire as it proceeded. The journal indicates we fired for approximately eight hours. This time is about average for a 30 cubic foot kiln for both a bisque and a glaze fire. Especially in a glaze fire, a soaking period is necessary to assure the absence of bubbles and the overall maturity of both body and glaze. Often so called 'fast-fire' may leave the body with black 'core' in the bisque, as well as glaze defects in the final firing. While I am aware of the arguments both pro and con, I have never felt the need to scrabble for profit rather than produce a mature product. Slow and easy is my motto. Being a potter is rarely the road to riches, certainly not in the short term. Examining the life of many potters, one finds the relatively

wealthy ones have built their road based upon teaching and/or a higher production with employees than Isao and I have sought.

We met Mimi Schmidt and Roy Mandell. Roy's grandfather had owned a curtain shop right next door to the old Lynda Pinkham Laboratory on Western Avenue, Lynn. This laboratory had become the studio of several potters including Phillip White, who had bought my Marblehead Anchor Pottery in Massachusetts. What goes 'round, comes 'round. Mimi and Roy are well known artists, and at that time lived at Beaver River, not far from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. They often visited us with their daughter Sabrina. We learned from each other about materials and media for expression in art and its craft. Isao especially observed both artists with admiration, and we often discussed the arts. Mimi told us of unknown local artists and artisans and led us to think about art for the market as well as for amour. Perhaps John Berger, the British critic, writes best about this subject in his monograph, *Art as Property*. The subject of Art, over art, has disturbed us greatly for many years.

Our personal view is that Art is an invention, unknown before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps somewhat earlier. Until art reached the market place and became 'special' as a part of trade, art was simply a part of everyday life, in itself no more important (and no less) than other means of communication. The great animal hunt figures on the walls of caves is no more or less Art/art than the murals on the Sistine Chapel, or graffiti on the walls of the New York Subway. 'Small a' art becomes Art in relation to its scarcity. As long as a painting can be kept from the dirty hands of working persons, it gains in marketable value, says the Art world.

I believe we must always ask the ... Why? Perhaps our first question arises with the Greek idealists. Why was it necessary to divorce mere function from everyday art? Within a similar context in our world, what is the real attraction of handicraft to the middle-class? My answer to the first question: to gain status in that early Greek world,

as the great moiling pot of humanity began to separate out into classes. My answer for today's question: high-tech western society no longer requires a middle class to act between workers and masters. In a corrupted sense we regress to an earlier stage of exploitation, the stage of master and slave.

I note that the vast majority of crafts persons appear to arise from that segment of society which, from once having a role to play in social interaction, now finds its class prerogatives without value. However, this class refuses to admit to mere working class status. It must surround itself with a new mythos in such crafts as woodworking, jewellery-making or potting. These pursuits with a base structure strong enough to support their pretensions must rise to the pinnacle and become Art. All of this social fiddling, while it increases value in the market-place, does nothing to increase its intrinsic value: sticks, metal and, mud.

Although Burt Cohen showed Isao techniques of making the East Indian pots by paddling the thickness and forming the bottom, Isao extended these techniques. She forms her decorated pots by a combination of wheel throwing and coiling. Then she does paddling and scraping of the thick walls down to thin section, still allowing enough thickness for carving and manipulation while the clay is semi leather-hard. She also began producing large vessels using both techniques from ancient Japanese coil building, Jyoomon and Yayoi, as well as the Nigerian 'patching' method. Looking back over the years, I see Isao's large pots becoming much larger and developing into the huge pieces she constructed in New Brunswick, which made necessary the construction of a much larger kiln.

Benjamin grew and Kai reached sixteen months of age. Each worked with us in proportion to his age and increasing ability. This requirement was simply a part of our firm commitment to their growth and maturity as well as our own. Naomi was a friend of Charlie Comeau. While Naomi was visiting with Charlie and his mother at Concession, she encouraged us to move to Yreka, California, where she

worked as a civil servant. We discussed our life style and our interest in community involvement. At that time Naomi appeared to have no argument with our plans. Later, we were less certain. Considering the harsh long winter months in Nova Scotia, we were attracted by the weather in California and geological sites of northern California. Other considerations gave weight to our move. Young persons in Clare found few attractions except fast driving and drinking. We decided to move once again to the West Coast. This time we would take a southern route to cross the US and head north up to California.

Having children with us never seemed to have been any great difficulty. They rolled around in the back seat of the van as we drove over the highways, played in the campgrounds with other children, and learned other accents of southern America. I believe Piaget as well as Noam Chomsky has pointed out that all the elements of speech are within the prattle of babies. As they grow, the elements sort themselves out into the languages most frequently spoken in their environment. By 1979/80, our two boys were separating their spoken language into English, French, and Japanese. They would soon be gaining elements of Spanish. I don't mean to imply that they immediately became linguists; rather they had no tribal barriers to learning.

Down the east coast and crossing into Louisiana, where I had, in past years discovered I could stuff myself and still lose weight, and made the further discovery that I was diabetic. From Louisiana into Texas where we reached an especially interesting and vacant winter campground at Huelco Tanks. This area was all buff-colored sandstone in weird and wind-carved shapes. Crossing South Texas, I recalled my earlier traverse in a troop train during 1944 (not with great pleasure and hardly nostalgic, although by this time the harsh edges had softened).

The ending of 1979s California dream began for us somewhat early with the knowledge that we would not be welcomed in Yreka, California. We found nowhere to live or to work, and Naomi was not about to put herself out in

that respect. We feel now that there was an element of fear in her attitude. Perhaps she had been surprised to see us turn up. Well, there was no point in pressing the issue. Charlie was in love and made no waves at all.

On the road again, north towards Vancouver, British Columbia. We stopped in Ashland, Oregon. Somehow we had the idea we might settle here for a time. Ashland, Oregon was a reasonably sized town with about 16,000 residents and a fine Shakespearean theatre, as well as artists and potters. Taking our courage in our hands, we approached the welfare people. As we sat waiting to be interviewed, we heard a female applicant being insulted by a screaming caseworker. I was upset. I had not found this attitude in Canada, which was the only place where we had needed to apply for assistance. We left Ashland and proceeded to Tacoma where we remained at a motel during one of the infrequent snowstorms. We bought new tires for the tired, old van. Benjamin came down with influenza and we followed suit.

The United States had been a disappointment. Back to Canada, and Vancouver, BC.

## 32

# More Dancing on the Longitudes

We believe strongly the building of gardens is vitally important to the production of clean, chemical-free food. We are beginning to recognize that over-prescription of antibiotics has built resistance into several micro-organisms, and that overuse of pesticides has resulted in decreasing the naturally occurring values of the soil. The production of more powerful drugs occurs as the rate of profit decreases. Since most researchers believe this finding, they also believe similar effects accumulate in our food, and there is little certainty that there is no interaction between one and the other. It would appear that 'cumulative' is a concept walled off from the public mind, as though every event is separate and discrete and occupies a little box all its own. Although the concept of the interdependency of all natural phenomena is certainly not new, it conflicts with the concept of individuality, which views mankind as a lonely creature in a universe with which he is in continual struggle.

Whether one is a rural dweller or a city dweller, there is little reason one or ten thousand persons cannot take part in the raising of food. Few greater pleasures exist than passing the great corporate food chain outlets and buying nothing. Granted the food chains are careful in washing and processing the food we consume. It is also true that the chains influence the making of the rules and regulations of our public organizations regarding maximum and minimum allowable residual chemicals. Take as an example a full head of lettuce measuring approximately eighteen inches across

in the field which ends as eight inches in diameter in the shopping bag. The tendency in the process is to concentrate residual poisons. Nearly all of the outer leaves are waste and end up, not on a compost pile where such garbage would be of great value, but in the landfill. I cannot stress too strongly the effects of accumulation/concentration. Each tiny bit of poisonous material, either in the landfill or in garden soil or in compost, results in build-up of as well as interaction between chemicals. Although we often accept the view that each event is discrete and does not affect the whole, this view is entirely erroneous. Community receives little financial gain. However, the individual CAN make a difference when acting in concert with other individuals.

Between 1980 and 1981, we four lived in Vancouver. Initially we stayed with my daughter Lori Hinton and her husband Peter. There we learned of the death of Lori's mother Sue back in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Through the Hintons we found our Prior Street home, a second floor apartment in an old wooden building. On the eight-foot section of porch railing available to us, we built three long boxes. These we filled with earth cribbed from a wooded area in an outlying forest and brought home in shopping bags. Our garden of twenty-four square feet was large enough to provide us with twenty-four lettuces. Not good. We were wasting nearly all of our vertical space. Three tomato plants, three zucchini plants, and three Japanese long eggplants, in addition to ten lettuces, could by no means provide enough vegetables for our needs. Somewhat later and after we had left Prior Street, a Community Garden was established with excellent results behind the nearby fire station. It is not that one must bind oneself to a site permanently but that one may start a movement for freedom and pass it on. What one requires is commitment.

In the meantime our children were growing. Living in Vancouver was of great advantage to Benjamin, since he could attend the Japanese Language School on Alexander Street. He was usually accompanied by Kai, who absorbed information like a small sponge. Benji was also attending

kindergarten at Seymour Elementary School. We suspect that he enjoyed this experience very much, although in his usual way he had little to say. At the Buddhist Church near Oppenheimer Park, we had a good pottery sale as a part of the Powell Street Japanese Festival. Isao was with the children most of the time. I was taking courses in anthropology at Simon Fraser University. These I dropped when we began making plans to return to the Maritimes. What I did not drop during this period was a large kidney stone. It sent me to hospital where I was operated on from belly button to backbone. When I was released from hospital, I was attended for a few weeks by a male nurse of Chinese extraction. I had also met a young man, Dean, who was very kind to Isao and me during my hospital stay. He disappeared soon after I returned home. With my usual paranoia of the time, I felt he might be an agent of government. Although he had left his wallet in our apartment, I forbore searching through it, perhaps feeling that such an act would be intrusive.

Isao had several good, bad and indifferent experiences in Vancouver. She worked as an interpreter for Japanese visiting groups of Tokyo firemen as well as for the Family Court. In general, our experiences with multi-culturalism were not the best. For several reasons we felt that multi-culturalism was simply a political ploy that would attempt to isolate various ethnic groups as having 'official' status rather than creating full Canadians of various ethnic backgrounds. This isolationist position allowed government to set up ethnic bureaucracies, probably agreed to by power-cliques within ethnic groups. In our opinion as Westerners, most of this ethnic power was to be found, not in the West, but in Ontario.

The immigrants of today tend to be very conservative in their view of themselves and of the world. This view is further strengthened by government policy on immigration and naturalization. Government policy sets up parameters that tend to exclude, "the tired, the worn, the yearning to be free." In fact, in Canada, except by implication and the

example of the American Statue of Liberty further south, such ideas as these never obtained here either as a colony or an oligarchy. There are many restrictions on immigration; such as, finances and marketable skills. Nowadays, the “farmer only” is excluded.

Our apartment on Prior Street was livable. We cut a window in the wall between kitchen and living room to open up the area a bit. The extra bedroom became our studio of sorts. We had no kiln but managed to throw some good pots. I was fortunate to meet Carol Wong-Chu who became our good friend and introduced us around town and especially to Wendy and Greg Eng. Greg was in charge of the Strathcona Community Center, which included a crafts section as well as a gym for sports, a Chinese orchestra and the drumming group, later to become famous as Katari Taiko. Isao and I were hired as part-time pottery instructors. Lucky for us Strathcona had a virtually unused electric kiln. Carol was an interesting person. She had been married and widowed in a very short time. Their marriage journey had taken them to India where Carol’s husband contracted an especially tenacious amoebic dysentery. In Carol’s words: “He turned orange and died.” Another friend, Bob, a caseworker for Human Resources, was kind enough to ‘invent’ a job for us under something called a VIP Program. This strategy was of great help to us financially and relieved us of working on small, part-time jobs; such as, slinging hash. In addition to Strathcona, we also worked at Trout Lake Community Center.

These two jobs were hardly a vast financial success but they kept us in beans and rice. “During the depression of the 1930s, my brothers and I went into the mountains near Mt. Wilson and filled sacs with brook sand. We brought the sand home and washed out the little bit of gold. It wasn’t much but it kept our family in beans and rice.” So said Don Mackenzie of California Institute of Technology. I thank him for reminding me of his own hard times. And why should we not thank people?

When we first arrived in Vancouver back in 1975, we went to the Human Resources office simply to transfer our Nova Scotia medical insurance to British Columbia. When I was interviewed, the interviewer glanced out into the waiting area, saw a small Japanese woman with a small child, excused himself and soon returned with a cheque. He apologized: "This is only a partial payment. Next week when you come here, we will have the full amount for you." Somewhat confused, I was urged out into the waiting area where I gathered up Isao and Benji and went out to our old van in which we had been living and travelling. Apparently we had applied for and been granted welfare.

No apologies here: after working for much of my life and making a contribution, both industrially and socially, I felt that I, as well as all persons in society, am owed the basics of life which allow us to go on. I believe it to be shameful that so many feel even to apply for public assistance is a defeat. In truth, NOT to fight for assistance is defeatist.

During our stay in Vancouver a large exhibition called Art Disco was held in Robson Square. We exhibited and sold a few pieces. Our work was not well-received at Circle Crafts. We were advised that it was not uniform. I believe we replied that, if uniformity was wanted, Circle Crafts should buy cheap and sell dear at any of the wholesalers around Vancouver. This statement made us no friends. Isao also exhibited her large vessels at the gallery of The Woman in Focus in Vancouver.

We had visitors! Isao's sister Keiko and her niece Hiromi from Tokyo and Howard Ferguson, who lived in Yellowknife at that time. Next Ed and Betsy Goodstein arrived from Grand Pré to see Betsy's daughter, who had recently had a baby. Ed wanted very much to see *Shogun*. So of course we had to purchase a TV set. The odd bit was that the cable lying on the floor in our apartment was operable, apparently from previous tenants. Very good. We now had all the channels. Ed told us that some years back he had bought a farm that included a large house. The place was at

St. Ignace, New Brunswick, and sounded like an ideal place to work and to build a wood-fired kiln.

Needless to say, we jumped at the chance to have a larger place, where the children could grow outside of cities and where we could work. This time when we moved, we drove right across Canada in our second van, a rally with a horrendously large, gas-guzzling engine but plenty of room for our equipment and ourselves.

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### Cameron's Mill, New Brunswick

Back East, this time, 1981, we would remain in one place for nearly six years. Our new home, courtesy of Ed & Betsy Stewart/Goodstein, was inland somewhat beyond the small village of St. Ignace in an area known as Desherbries, also known as Cameron's Mill. Desherbries is not to be confused with "a place of herbs" but rather "weeds." The house was large, five rooms down and four rooms up. I believe the cornerstone indicated 1884, making it older than a century when we left it in 1987. The acreage was extensive, more than 100 acres, and was situated just across the little Kouchibouquacis River and accessed by means of an ancient, covered bridge. There was also a lovely hill for skiing and a stream for playing.

The kitchen was large with windows in opposite walls. Off the kitchen was a small pantry which had been used as a country store at one time. Behind the great kitchen stove, complete with a Boston Breeze oil-burner, was a postal wicket left from some older usage of the kitchen as the local Cameron's Mill Post Office. We were informed that at least a part of the house had been moved down the river on a barge many years ago. (I can only surmise that the Kouchibouquacis River must have been much deeper or that the move took place during spring floods.) The bath and toilet, just to the right of the stove, followed in a circular movement through the room to the sink. Forward of the kitchen, the downstairs bedroom was on the right. On the left a smaller room we converted and redecorated as a

Japanese room complete with Tokonoma, Tatami and Shoji. On the same side and forward to the front of the house was the 'priests' sitting room.' I do not know how this tradition began except that, as I recall, in the old days this room was very formal. Equipped with heavy drapes and horsehair furniture, it was used only on very formal occasions when the local priest or other dignitaries visited. Leading from this room was the spacious family room. Lots of windows and sunshine in season. The house was heated by a large oil furnace and a fireplace we never used. A sun porch and the staircase to the upper regions consisting of a large hallway and four bedrooms.

Beyond the kitchen to the rear of the house and through the door were the back hall, a large woodshed and, to the right, a room used as a garage or tractor storage room. Over this gorgeous ensemble presided a set of stairs leading to one very large, open room and two smaller rooms. This entire area became our throwing room, and our glaze room. The larger room was used for storage as well as a ping-pong table, and did double duty for a tile layout. All in all, just about perfect for potters: two adults and two small children, soon to be joined by Ossa, a medium-sized dog who would become mother of five beautiful children.

Very nearly our first major task was to build a large trestle table for our expected guests and us. We built this of 2x6's to take any kind of beating. The table became the meeting-place. Netty Meyer and Hans Baum often came down to see us. Ed Goodstein and Isao's brother, Dr. Yoshitomo Sanami, dined with us on his way to or from Japan and Europe. Midge Leavitt was our provincial home schooling agent. She came to check on the progress of Kai and Benjamin as home-schooled children and declared herself satisfied. Ben had originally begun grade one at the local primary school where French was taught but was not allowed to continue since, "He doesn't speak French." (Just about the most foolish un-reason we could think of.) Since we had all the tools of learning at home and there were local children to play with, we began home schooling with

permission from the provincial Ministry of Education. Incidentally, they supplied us with no materials whatever. Instead they supplied Midge Leavitt, a most understanding government representative.

From the beginning we felt the best we could give our children was to be with them and to provide the widest world possible. To that end, we early bought a computer and a telescope in addition to a microscope and Olympus camera, which were gifts from Isao's sister Keiko. Not to pressure the children in the use of these instruments but, like books of all sorts, to have resources available. It is true; we were on welfare for nine months. It is also true; we never allowed this state to diminish us. We used the little income to broaden our life rather than stifle it. At one point we were cut from the welfare rolls. The reason given was that we must divest ourselves of all our tools before we could become eligible for support. It was an absurd requirement. If a carpenter or any other tradesperson had the tools of his trade, he could seek work. Without tools he is at the mercy of an employer. What might be even more deplorable would be that the tradesman, being unable to work at his trade, would soon lose the fine edge of skill necessary to the trade. A person's tools are to a great extent what makes a person. We certainly had no wish to be placed in the position of 'Lumpen.' Isao successfully fought the decision. We were once more placed on the rolls. We declined it since I had applied for an early social security pension from the US.

I believe we learned considerably from that experience. Interesting sidelight: Although we were replaced upon the welfare rolls, we were never given any written notification, only a very short telephone communication. It appeared as though policy always took precedence over any written decision. This attitude gave a bureaucracy great control over those administered. We feel that our children also learned from this state of affairs, since we never separated our concerns from them, not because they were children and could be treated as second-class citizens but because they

were persons in their own right and deserved full acceptance in the family.

The first winter at Cameron's Mill was about as rough as anyone could wish. Many mornings we awoke with a fine drift of snow covering our bed. The children, being ignorant of life, fared much better and faced winter directly, spending as much time out of doors as indoors. Obviously, snow was to ski on and we had a lovely hill as well as many acres around us for cross-country. Yes, Isao and I spent much time on skis too, but the children lived in the snow, building igloos of increasing complexity and size. When Shirley Bear, Canadian aboriginal artist and her husband, Peter Clare, basketmaker, with their daughter, Ramona, visited with us, Ramona built igloos along with Ben and Kai. At one time we had a drift of snow as high as the entryway and had to tunnel out into the open world. We watched the train of snow removal equipment passing our steamed kitchen window. This too passed away and spring arrived. We spent several days to collect sap from the maples and made our own maple syrup. I went hunting for partridge across the river and bagged a few as well as a rabbit or two. That first winter sounds difficult as I write of it ... it was not. WE enjoyed every bit of it, even the cold of our upstairs studio where we worked preparing pots for our first crafts market in Fredericton, and where we met Peter Clare and became friends. The beauty of the Fredericton Farmers' Market is that it is all under cover. It is very well attended for its extent. Isao also had the good fortune to sell a portrait of me to Margaret McCain and it was hung in the Lord Beaverbrook Gallery.

[2002. The big news today: "FBI announced three days ago that they had information (presumably through US Army sources) leading them to believe that a terrorist attack was imminent." Well, we are waiting. We have the feeling that a terrorist attack is always imminent and that the Taliban prisoners at Guantinomo Base are staging a put-on in hopes they are right. Surely, such news finds already terrorized ears in Canada and the US. The BC Liberal (sic) government

will continue its Draconian pathway to make capitalism more palatable and to continue sucking up to the wealthy.]

We were very fortunate at Cameron's Mill in having halfway decent soil. Much of the area and especially the hillside going down to the river had been pasturage for many years. Uphill and beside the house, there had been a large barn, which had been bulldozed down before our arrival. Our neighbor Eric Thebeau informed us that they had cleared out a lot of weeds at the same time. He pointed to one cleared section near the house. I looked at the spot he indicated and saw that it had once held a thriving bed of asparagus, "We thought that stuff was just weeds." Too bad, it takes several years to nourish a good bed of 'grass'. However, we found a fine clump of asparagus, and this weed, as well as other vegetables, provided us with sustenance for several years.

There was one small shed not far from the house which we adapted for some rabbits as well as hens. The manure of both animals would be valuable. The rabbit (one of many) came to us from Fernand Daigle, although not without a struggle: "You want him. You catch him." And that we did and he was delicious, but not before he had accomplished his duty as a father.

Against the sunny wall of the shed, we built a small greenhouse and in front of it we planted melons and other vegetables. My neighbor informed me that they didn't raise melons around there. "Too cold." Well, perhaps so, but we planted them, anyway and had a fine crop under cover. We also raised broccoli, another 'unusual' vegetable mixing with several flowers in the neighborhood. I recall from my own childhood on visits to the Maritimes our diet consisted of wild meat, fish, potatoes, parsnips and cabbage. In early spring fiddleheads and dandelion greens would be added to the menu as "Good for cleaning out the winter blood." I hasten to add that these greens were not preferred over maple syrup and vast amounts of sugar. Dandelion greens were always bitter and fiddleheads were tolerated only when drenched with bacon fat. As a diabetic, nearly

everything I consume has sweetness. Having grapefruit one morning, I invited a local visitor to join me. He very nearly gagged: "Jesus H. Christ, don't you have any sugar?"

There seems to be a North American mistrust of consuming vegetables. I say North American because the same feeling appears to exist south of the border as well as in the north. I believe historical evidence suggests that meat in Europe was in very short supply as well as very expensive. Effectively, the land base diminished as population increased. I note that former Europeans in Canada have become meat eaters, yet in Europe they are big fish eaters. Here in British Columbia, it does not surprise me that vegetables are eschewed by the historically British. I've seen how they may mistreat vegetables by cooking them to death.

Wherever we have found ourselves, our gardens have been successful. I expect this is because we are willing to work hard at the soil, work hard at building a good base and using good, natural materials to stimulate growth without the use of unnatural chemical additions. None of our several gardens has been fertilized with chemicals. As a result, for several years the soil must be built, and the building continued. We used nothing but natural manure and riverweeds. Doubtless the use of pesticides results in larger salvageable crops. However, there is a trade-off: With the passage of time and season, any sort of natural growth adapts and survives. Perhaps only a few weeds or vegetables out of an entire crop ... that first year. One then pays for more powerful chemical dressing, and the bill increases with time. A garden fertilized with natural manure tends to increase its output rather than decrease. Not only does the total volume of the crop tend to increase but the volume and health of the soil also increases. So the first few years the crop diminishes somewhat before it adapts to natural materials. Why must we believe that every garden must be built in one season? It is as foolish a concept as purchasing vegetables in a market or purchasing lawn to cover a bald spot. We are infected by the society in which we live. One must desire a machine for every activity, as one must have a

uniform for every sport and every sport, including sex, must be institutionalized.

It is true that we sacrifice perhaps 10% of our crop to insects. I know the 10% is a small sacrifice if the result is a healthier garden. For a time we owned a tiller. Well, that's a fine instrument. When we analyze the cost, it becomes an expense. For nine months of the year the machine is unused. For three months at most it uses gasoline and oil and is an additional expense. After using a tiller for a few months, we sold it. Now each year we spade up one to three new rows and turn over the fresh sod. This plan will give us from 50 to 100 square ft of new garden space annually. The time used in this expansion is only about an hour and easily gives us an additional row of many vegetables. Cut a hole in the sod and fill it with compost and a seedling. I hasten to add that we have no intention of going into the business of selling vegetables. Our prime intention is to provide ourselves with food and to reduce our dependence upon the retail marketplace. We have sold only enough heads of early lettuce to purchase seed and Remay as our beds' cover. Each year our dependence diminishes. It will never be reduced to zero, and we do not believe zero to be eminently desirable.

Having got our garden and animal husbandry well underway, we began a kiln. The four of us built the first one at our weed site with the fieldstone, a simple Roman arch updraft kiln with an interior of perhaps eight cubic feet. This project was not very successful since it was almost wholly above ground. (More ancient Roman arch kilns were built on hillsides and quite deeply shouldered into the hill.) In the meantime Shirley Bear gave Isao several tips for applying for a grant and introduced her to a curator of the Gallery of Moncton University. Isao began making fifteen large vessels each approximately measures 26" x 32". After the completion of vessels, Isao applied for an Explorations Grant from the Canada Council for the Arts and received \$7,700.00 to build a "large kiln as an art object." In addition to the grant, we provided over \$4,000.00 of our own meager finances taken from our day to day food and gas money.

When completed, this second kiln measured approximately 38 ft long including the 12 ft chimney. Inside measured about 26 ft long x 3 ft in diameter and 4 ft high, well over 300 cubic feet of setting space. We needed every bit, since Isao had planned for several very large pots, more than 100 smaller pots, and the pots of local friends who helped in both the building and the firing.

This was the largest kiln we had ever planned and built. It was of Anagama configuration, set at an angle of approximately fifteen degrees and at that time the largest wood-fired kiln in Eastern Canada. (Elsewhere we show photos of the construction.)

Stage #1. After laying out the general form we hired a backhoe from a friendly neighbor and had him excavate a stepped ditch of three levels. Much of the ditch, especially the lowest level, was formed of an angulate sandstone naturally occurring at that site. In some ways this stone was an advantage, since it gave us a solid sub-strate. Since there would be no subterranean water present, the stone acted as a low-value insulation.

Stage #2 required a small cement mixer, which we purchased. A small electric mixer is invaluable at any farm and pottery. Upon this concrete base we spread sifted sand of relatively uniform particle size. Upon this floor we laid insulating firebrick for the full length of the kiln and somewhat beyond the intended walls.

Stage #3. The wall bricks were laid butt-in to give a full 9 inch wall, and constructed up to the point of the beginning of the arch with its 6 inch rise.

Stage #4. We then constructed of plywood and lath the forms for the kiln roof. (Note: arches appear daunting to the tyro. In fact, few constructions are simpler and certainly few constructions are stronger once finished. We were impressed when in Mexico and elsewhere we saw workers (both men and women) scrambling with complete unconcern over the half-completed roof of a building, often laying brick beyond the forms without support. To err on the side of our own security, we used a thin slurry of AP Green 'Sair set' between

brick. This stage was more for filling the small interstices between bricks than for mechanical strength.

From front to back, the roof of the kiln was somewhat lozenge-shaped, which I have described with respect as "Uterine." The interior was plastered with AP Green 'Greencoat.' Again, for our own security we built a frame around the fire-box area and held this in place with 3 inch angle-irons. The firebox door was cut and bent from a single piece of 2 inch angle-iron, and its cover from steel plate hung from a rafter of the building constructed to shield the kiln from the elements. A number of access holes, 4 inch in diameter and tapered, were cut through the kiln side-walls for visual examination of the interior as well as for ports for adding the small wood splints during final stages of a firing. Several much smaller holes were drilled to allow insertion of the thermocouple.

Note: Few potters depend upon the accuracy of a thermocouple. The final arbiters are the cones. When these bend, they indicate the maturity of the stacked ware within the kiln. There should be a cone pat of three cones to each ten cubic feet of kiln space. The bending of the first cone indicates approaching maturity. The second, or middle cone, bends to indicate the maturity and the third cone indicates that maturity has somewhat passed. At this point the fire should be reduced to allow a 'soaking' period. This 'evens out' the maturity. Although the foregoing is ideal, most potters go beyond this point, either to save the cost of cones, or simply that they trust their eyes more than cones or pyrometers.

A longitudinal slice through the center of the kiln would reveal three distinct steps or levels from firebox to a small, venturi-shaped chamber at the chimney end. This section can be described as a hypocaust, a very hot chamber with an independent damper capable of being adjusted or completely closed. Had we wished we could have used this chamber independently of the kiln. We packed it with small pots and left the damper open. The front of the kiln at the firing chamber was braced against the potential movement

of the hill, or the kiln shifting, by the use for additional security of 2.5 inch steel pipe, its nether end mounted in a concrete base.

The sides of the kiln shack were hung on large hinges and often opened fully to allow heat escape as well as large wood storage areas. We included a small bench at the low end of the kiln, useful for a tape machine (gotta have music) as well as for preparing pots, and holding the coffeepot. Isao created the six-foot stone wall on both front sides of the kiln, using the stones that came from the site. She also made steps beside the kiln. Building a kiln, wood, oil, gas fired, is a labor of love which cannot be approached by purchase of an electric kiln, which can also be built by the potter. However, to do so is a time-consuming project, and is probably less expensive to buy. Our friend Xavier built his own electric kiln and made a fine job of it.

Up until a few years ago, the kiln at Cameron's Mill was used each summer for several weeks by students from the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design under Professor Walter Ostrum, as well as by students from the Université de Moncton under Professor Marie Ulmar. Although the house and property were purchased as a local community site, the kiln continued to be used and to withstand the New Brunswick winter. We believe this project to be eminently successful in its continued use. Six years later in 1987, we left Cameron's Mill and offered the kiln to the Canada Council, more out of politeness than anything else. But as it turned-out, our project not only was useful for a long period but also received considerable attention from the media. Because of the present world pollution, I doubt we would build such a kiln in the future.

## 34

### Mexico

Sometime previous to 1984, Burt had spoken to us about joining him and Leslie in travelling to Mexico. George Ryga, the Canadian author about whom I have written elsewhere, owned a house at Ajijic, not far from Guadalajara, and we might possibly stay there.

Having gotten somewhat settled in New Brunswick, we decided it might be a good time for a short visit to Mexico. My only experience had been a trip to Tiajuana when I had been working at the California Institute of Technology. Tiajuana was then like a flea-market jammed with cheap trinkets and brothels, both offered at high prices. There appeared little chance Tiajuana had improved and hardly worth a return visit. Certainly, our old van wouldn't make the trip without considerable agony. A bit of luck gave us the means to buy a new car ... if it was cheap. A dealer in Richibucto had a lovely brand new Mitsubishi Colt complete with a bright red galloping pony on its side, and incredible gas mileage. The vehicle wouldn't sell. It was far too small for Richibucto muscle men. A few years later, Benjamin and Kai would be too big to fit in the back seat. Presently the Colt was just the right size.

We quickly packed and were on our way, a firm decision to enter Mexico still tentative. One of our intentions was to visit with the Ferguson gang: Amy at Camden, Maine; Suzy at Newburyport, Massachusetts; Laura at Ocean City, New Jersey; as well as Sandra and Christie at Key West, Florida. We drove directly to Maine in the U.S., making our usual

mandatory stop at L.L.Bean, Freeport. The Bean emporium had changed. Gone was the sleepy old camper, fisherman's second floor shop, smelling of rubber boots and deceased worms. Now it had been replaced with the most modern of Yuppie malls. L.L.Bean had become sanitized, trivialized and modernized.

Following a ten-minute visit with Amy Ferguson, we continued on to Newburyport, Massachusetts. A brief chat with Suzy Ferguson and then the short drive to Swampscott, Massachusetts, and Lynn. We continued on to New York City where we made a quick stop at the apartment of Rose Mary Meecham and Douglas Gordon. No one at home. What a pity. I hadn't seen my old friends for years. Well, maybe next time around we'd have better luck. (Several years later, when we had moved west again, we renewed our friendship in person, as they too had moved west to Seattle/Mercer Island.)

Philadelphia. Where we couldn't view the Liberty Bell, since it was under-wraps, awaiting the 300th anniversary of the American Revolution. Perhaps the Americans were embarrassed at the right turn of the US towards imperialism. Or was that the intention all along? We shall never know, but the history of earlier imperialism surely gives us a clue. (I imagine the only work done was to clean the crack in the bell and polish the lettering.) We managed to make the proper turns off the highway and find Laura Ferguson at Ocean City, New Jersey.

ZIPP, Florida. We refused to make a stop at Miami, which we felt was an armed camp, barbed wire walls topped with broken glass and armed security guards preventing attack either from the sea or the land. After negotiating land mines, we arrived at Everglades National Park. A lovely place although not half as large as it had been before Mr. Flagler had arrived from New York (?) and had the mangrove swamps dredged for one of his grandiose land development schemes. Surely this area was a part of the lands once occupied by the Seminoles who had been driven to ever smaller areas, first by the Spanish and later by English, etc.

Everglades was filled with birds, campers with millions of small children and good sanitation. There were also manatees, many appearing as large as floating islands, scarred on their backs from frequent collisions with boat propellers.

1984 was still in the period when the Parks people were spraying everything in or out of sight and swearing that there was no danger in so doing. (Shades of George Orwell.) Ah, but there were no mosquitos! The world had been made safe for tourism, as WW2 had been made safe for all of us in Southeast Asia by spraying tons of DDT on our heads. Have there been changes in our DNA? Are we the same persons we would have been without the benign use of DDT? We will never know.

We continued on our rambling drive all the way to Key West, where we met Sandra Ferguson as well as her daughter, Christie, and gave them news of the other Ferguson girls. Sandra was an excellent seamstress (as well as parachute jumper!) and had spent the previous few years living in the van Howard had rebuilt, making dolls and selling them at fairs and crafts markets.

It was wonderful to meet all of these old friends with whom we had lived at the Old Howard Hotel at Meteghan River, Nova Scotia. Canada was daily being eclipsed by distance. Finally deciding that Mexico would be our destination, we continued on around the Gulf of Mexico into Texas. Stopping for gasoline, we got into conversation with the 'good old boy' filling the gas tank and asked him about holidaying in Mexico. "Why, I go down that way 'bout every weekend. Fahn bunch of people. Ah'd hev them home fa' dinner anytime." A strange contradiction perhaps but his heart was in the right place. Such contradictions must be common. Years previously I had dined in an Italian restaurant in Madison, Wisconsin. My host commented upon the owner: "You know, I like him. He's as good as a white man anytime." So it goes, trying to sieve the gold from the dross of prejudice and human relationships. Our heads now screwed on the right way, we continued to Laredo,

Texas, stopping to purchase expensive automobile insurance for thirty days.

At Nueva Laredo we had to stop at Mexico's Customs and Immigration. Here I made a terrible mistake by bribing the customs agent with a US 100 dollar note instead of a 100 peso note. Well, I guess he was sufficiently impressed, since he gave us no trouble and a magnificent smile. I trust his children were happy.

Down through Nuevo Laredo. No great difference between there and border Texas. Both are desert areas and the population on both sides of the border obviously Hispanic. No abrupt cultural transition: same tribal attitudes and the same polyester shirts and language. We sped past a Cactus Research Station, one of the many places I did not stop and even now I berate myself lightly.

That night we stopped at a motel in Saltillo. It is rarely our habit to dine in restaurants when it can be avoided. We snacked on our emergency supplies. (Considering my early days in the food business, this antipathy is understandable). Despite our fatigue sleeping that night was not easy. The bed in the next room kept banging into our wall and rattling our bed for much of the night. We understood the nature of the motel's business when around 3 a.m. the banging ceased and we heard a car leave. Good luck, amigo, may you break out in boils.

At over 8,000 feet the city of San Luis Potosi was impressive. It is one of the fabled silver cities where the Spanish enslaved the native peoples for the greater glory of God and the Spanish crown. There is always something magical about arriving in any new place at dawn, and San Luis Potosi filled the menu in every respect. Clean sandy streets, nearly vacant in early morning. Quite by accident we parked right beside a restoration of an ancient hand ball court. It appeared to us that a country like Mexico, with ancient civilizations all around, need spend little on mere restorative measures. Their history is everywhere unlike North America beyond the Gulf of Mexico. Why? Imperialism is a stage of development among capitalist

nations which forces them to expand beyond their borders and eventually to decline and be eclipsed by other rising nations. As even ancient stone is everywhere worn smooth, so the faces of the Mexican peoples reflect their histories and racial mixtures. Like people everywhere, whiteness is preferred over brown or yellow. However, this choice may be a class prejudice passed DOWN through a rising middle class rather than UP from a peasantry.

Onward to Guadalajara. Like most Norte Americanos, Mexicans are enamoured of the motor car, and Guadalajara, when the smog thins, mirrors this love affair. Travelling on in the direction of Ajijic, we decided to spend the night at St. Anthony, which is also on the shore of Lago Chappala. We spent the night in a hotel much like those of New Orleans or other Spanish hotels; no air-conditioning but balconies all around an atrium. The Hotel Nijo was quite comfortable and happily quiet. After a restful night came the morning and huevos revueltos, pan tostados and café solo. Hardly a day in Mexico and already I'm speaking fluent something. Buenos tardes. WOW!

We knew that George Ryga had a small house at Ajijic. Burt and Leslie told us they would go there. What if they didn't show? We had not seen them since Summerland, BC, nor had we communicated with them. Well, live in hope. We parked in St. Anthony, left the car, and directly across the street coming out of a shop were Leslie, Burt and Amy.

Hugs and kisses all around and off we went together for some lunch. It seems that the house was already spoken for but we could occupy it for a few days. Lovely house, especially the papaya and other fruit trees. Not a very large property but compact and filled with all sorts of interesting plants. Ben's birthday would be within a few days. We bought a gigantic piñata and invited the neighborhood children to attend a birthday party and piñata bang. Great fun for everyone especially the newcomers from Canada.

We remained at the Ryga house for only a few days before finding another place where we could all be together and still free to move as we wished. Ajijic was a colorful

place, typical I suppose, of small Mexican towns except for the swarms of Canadians. Apparently, Ajiji was a favored winter stopping place for Albertans and other Canucks. The exchange rate was quite passable and gasoline was cheap, since the company was state owned. A long story here, which I will not go into in any detail. When Mexico had freed itself from many of its former dominators (first the Spanish, then the Americans), much of its small and undeveloped industry had been seized by the state and put to public use. Unfortunately, as time progressed, when industry had expanded and become corporately desirable, much of it passed into private hands. Corruption became a way of life and seems not to have diminished. American corporations have seen Mexico as the future third world country awaiting the exploitation of cheap labour only a short distance from the United States.

Our new place consisted of two bedrooms and a kitchen, almost on the shore of Lago Chappala, an area of market gardens. The roots of vegetables planted in the stones along the shore (all very interesting since the lake is highly polluted with herbicides, pesticides and process-converting fertilizers). Produce to be sent north to the United States. It is my understanding that many of these vast farming areas are now owned by American supermarkets. Again: cheap labor, no chemical regulations and no safety regulations. And, I suppose, with the usual, godly excuse; "Well, you know, before we arrived, these people had nothing. Now they have electricity, washing machines, TV. All the good things of a developed society."

Currently (2002), once each month I attend a 'Feel good' forum where we discuss various subjects. This past month 'backward countries' became a subject. I confess I am somewhat confused about the term 'backward'. It appears to me that a ready opportunity to gain food and shelter is just about all any society need guarantee to assure success. All the other thousand and one items are mere window-dressing made necessary by skilful and unconscionable marketing. It is not that these things are intrinsically bad.

They are bad because such attitudes are the death of all morality. Relativism has been developed into the tool of absolute opportunism. I hardly believe Albert Einstein planned this result when he wrote either his *Limited* or his *General Theory of Relativity*. We are not yet out of the Dark Ages and into the Light. The postulates of the one and only Apostolic Church may have been overthrown but the poison continues.

Despite the foregoing, we enjoyed our visit to Mexico. We drove to Morelos, a university city, and bought the required serapé and a tape of left-wing songs. Burt and I took a side trip to Manzanillo to see a person Burt had known when he was living at Summerland. The man was an itinerant fruit picker back north. In Mexico he operated several small cottages quite near the ocean. On our return trip to Ajijic, we loaded the car with coconuts, papaya and other delicacies.

Ben and Kai, as well as joining the neighborhood children, spent considerable time as our general 'gofers.' Every morning they were off to the Tortillaria, just down the town street, neatly folded cloth in hand. Ben bought tortillas from two local women. Kai walked just across the street, to buy a liter of orange juice. After bringing home their purchases, they were off to play and learn the language. All this glorious and relaxed living must not last for long. We had to return to New Brunswick and complete our new kiln. Now, of course, we were old-timers in Mexico and met few problems as we headed north.

Our only major stop was in Monterey, a city we would just as soon eliminate from our travels. Monterey is an industrial city and I suppose many travellers can live with this fact. Industrially, Monterey is back in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with few of the worker safety measures we would consider necessary farther North. It serves as a prime example of industrial pollution running rampant.

Except that we accomplished the return trip to New Brunswick, I have little memory of actual events. I did not

make the same mistake leaving Mexican Customs and Immigration as I had upon arrival, for me, a definite Plus.

## 35

# Hello, Japan; Goodbye, New Brunswick

The year following our Mexico trip, Burt, Leslie, Amy and their new baby Micah joined us at Cameron's Mill, New Brunswick, to complete the kiln and cut three cords of wood for the first firing. Kai and Ben built a small wood fire kiln, not far from the fire-breathing monster. As our family had always worked together on our various projects, we were happy to see they were putting their knowledge in practice. The children also spent much of their spare time working on the riverbank building a very complicated network of roads and small buildings they named 'Little World.'

Around that time we saw my mother in hospital in Lynn and realized she would not survive for another year. We agreed with her that "getting hooked up to hoses and drips would be foolish." At that time, although not actively ill, she was unable after 88 years of poorly paid labor to continue. She was simply worn out. When she died shortly after our return to Canada, we did not attend her funeral. I am certain the few surviving remnants of my Aunt Eleanor's family will never forgive my decision. It seemed to me then, and I still hold the opinion, that driving all the way down to Lynn and back only to view a box would be foolish. I would also have little interest in a personal ceremony. My mother, Alice Madelyn Weld Morrill Dill, worked hard for her own and my support. I do not believe I ever disliked her. Except for a mere handful of events, however, we were not close. She rarely could take time for pleasure. Closer to the truth is

that my grandmother and grandfather raised me. I felt closer to them and I certainly thank them both.

It took us five months to accomplish the kiln with a great help from Burt and Leslie. Here is the list of the kiln firing crew: Burt Cohen, Leslie Barton, and their two children Amy and Micah from British Columbia; later, Ed Goodstein from Grand Pré; Geraldine Allain from Richbucto; Jill and Jack Hudson and their two daughters from Rexton; and Anh and Charles Melanson from Kouchibouguac. I have to mention here several bottles of baby oil that we consumed for protecting ourselves from blackflies. After a successful bisque firing, Leslie, Amy and Micah left us and later Burt, it was a painful event for all of us.

We decided to go to Japan. Kai had never been in Japan, and the time had arrived to exhibit our second bean sprout. More importantly, Isao's father was now eighty-two (1986), and she and I were concerned for his well-being. Here we are in 2002, and Sanami-san, despite the usual physical complaints, continues to plow ahead to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. More power to him.

Through our kind friends Inaba of Summerland, we were fortunate to obtain an inexpensive flight to Tokyo. Since 1970 the Inabas have operated an orchard and vegetable garden on a hillside overlooking the lake in Summerland. Every autumn for the past twelve years, Inaba-san has invited us to Summerland to receive masses of fruit and vegetables from these kind and generous farmers and orchardists. In many ways, we admire the centrality of their lives ... their dedication to the land that they work.

Off to Japan for the first time in ten years, the flight neither more nor less tiring than it had been in the past. Upon landing at Narita Airport, we were immediately in shock. Amazed and shocked. Culture shock .... For us old Japan hands? Yes, there had been changes as one might expect. Japan was a dynamic society in many ways and had rebounded from the defeats of WW2 to become an industrial world leader. Well, we expected the old Japan still to be there. Temples, bonzes and Zen and all of that continued,

but the multi-colored hair, the stilted platform soles of young women's boots, skirts up to pubic hair, and heavy make-up among young women— this was all new to us. Gone were the shy and immature girls of twenty years ago. Present was the brashness of Americanized young persons, as marketing in the emerging imperialist state spread throughout the earth. American marketing genius had overtaken Japan. Style was king, and woe betide those persons foolish enough to resist the latest fashions.

2002. I have the distinct impression that many of these changes are now the result of a downturn in Japanese corporate business. The same corporations control Japan today as fifty years ago. While the economy in the homeland appears to have suffered, I doubt very much that the international Japanese corporations have been caught napping. In some cases they have joined with US corporate interests (Sony/Techtronics) as well as corporate interests in European countries. Add to that the purely Japanese world corporations and, despite the bankruptcies at home, the corporate interests are doing fine. I do contend that it is in the interest of Japanese corporations to preserve the ancient feudal attitudes at home, just as "Mom, apple pie, and the flag" are the shibboleths of the Western World. While I do not espouse conspiracy theories, in fact history and personal interest often work as unconscious collaborators. One must always ask, "Who benefits?" and the answer is rarely the body politic. Governmental regulatory bodies are easily circumvented, given enough cash and lawyers. Democratic governments have interests identical with corporate interests.

After a short visit with Isao's family, we flew to Ariake on the island of Kyushu. Landing at Fukuoka, we took a train to the home of our friends Fujiko and Rikio Hashimoto. For a short time Rikio had been a student of mine in Kyoto. Since then they had both become very well known as potters and had built a new Anagama kiln after a disastrous fire in their previous Anagama (not uncommon for wood-firing potters). Rikio immediately secured us a place to live. At

the top of a mountain not far from his new home and kiln, there existed a very old and somewhat famous temple: Inasa-jinjya. The temple and surrounding buildings were more than 500 years old. One tree, a sacred object, is more than 600 years old. If one must have sacred objects, what better than those of nature? Our house in one of the buildings was therefore very old and, although somewhat drafty, pretty near perfect for the four of us. (Few persons from New Brunswick are fortunate enough to have a pomegranate tree just outside their window.)

We were expected to act as temporary caretakers of the entire property. Each morning Kai and Ben went out into the temple yard and carefully swept the ground using their bamboo yard-brooms, smoothing the earth and appearing to our eyes as diminutive Zen novitiates. After we had been at the temple for two months or so, Kasahara-san, wife of the resident Shin-to priest, came to our house and handed Isao an envelope. When she had left, Isao told me that it was a payment for our services, since getting anyone to live in these ancient houses was extremely difficult. I thought it a lovely gesture. The cash was also intended for our two sweepers.

Mrs. Kasahara was an interesting person. Her children had grown and left home, but she continued a tradition of preserving plums (Uméboshi). As a result, she must have had more than a hundred jars awaiting her children's arrival. I am happy to report that she shared her Umeboshi with us, although her output was far larger than we could consume. Her husband, Kasahara-sensei, was a local schoolteacher as well as the priest at Inasa-jinjya. Because of its connection with the Shinto philosophy, which had been used during the Japanese military phase both before and during WW2, it had been felt expedient after the war to raze the entire compound. Fortunately, everything at the top of the mountain was saved by some of the local persons as a tourist attraction.

I noticed that the finials on the roof-beams looked as though they had been copied from ancient drawings of

woolly mammoths. I have not been able to find the truth of my observation, but I have seen these figures several times over the years. At the Saga temple where one of the buildings was being restored, the great long roof-beams had been carved with the merest suggestion of the mammoths. Much of the temple design had arrived from India via China with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan and had resulted in a melding of both philosophies. During the late Meiji period, Shin-to, (a native form of Animism) had been welded to Bushi-do out of political (military) expediency. This had divorced the taint of the light of Buddhism from Shinto, which gave Shinto a much more war-like aspect and made joining it to Bushi-do easier. Prior to WW2, Myo-shinji temple of the Rinsai sect of Zen Buddhism was (if I am in error, I apologize) a mild hotbed of leftward leaning social activism. The writings of Karl Marx were certainly known and often acted upon. How I ended up teaching at Myo-shinji, Hanazono, near Kyoto, I will never know. However, I am most grateful to have met and been influenced by Mumon Yamada, Zen master and president of Hanazono Daigaku.

Inasa-jinja, our mountain home, was achieved with difficulty after a climb up more than 100 natural stone steps worn by the feet of thousands of pilgrims over six centuries. From the village of Ariaké, itself somewhat above sea level, the long climb began. Passing through an ancient Torii, the stone steps rose quite steeply and passed into obscurity high above us. Our route passed only one home, that of a Zen master whom we did not meet. I believe him to have been the master of the Zen temple itself, which was on the left, some distance higher and surrounded at this time of year (March) with blossoming cherry trees. Although this temple is closed, few buildings in old Japan can deny access to the persistent visitor.

Continuing our climb, we crossed a fine gravel road we did not know existed and which would have brought us directly to the Shinto temple; so much for directions from the locals. It was perhaps just as well we had to walk since,

had our eyes not been cast down upon the stones, we might have missed that first sight of Inasa-jinjya soaring among clouds.

The convenient roadway near the brow of the mountain turned right to the home of Kasahara-sensei or left to approach our house, after passing through the temple yard and a smaller Torii. From the rear of our house, one received a view of the full sweep of Ariaké far below surrounded by neat farmland running to the distant sea; forward, to the East China Sea and to Shanghai!

The situation was indeed ideal for us. We unpacked and trotted (yes, even I) down the mountain to Rikio and Fujiko's kiln. Perhaps not that day, but soon we would pack the raw ware in Rikio's new kiln. We have videos showing the entire process of packing and sealing, and the long process of firing, cooling and unpacking. We were fortunate to bring a potter's wheel up to our house from Rikio's studio. Isao threw a number of pots and these, as well as a few of mine, found their way into the firing.

Seven days and seven nights of firing. Of firing, sleeping and eating, surrounded by loving friends come to join the Fire Master. But first Fujiko swept and sprinkled water in front of the kiln and hung a string of paper held in several square pieces. Then she placed a piece of square hand-made paper. On top of the paper she set a small cup of saké, a cup of water and a bowl of grains of rice. Next come the Shinto ceremony conducted by Kasahara-sensei in full dress in which the kiln was duly consecrated to all of the natural spirits of the earth. With the news that my maternal great-grandmother had been a MicMac of Nova Scotia, all the spirits of the native lands over the seas were also invited. Who are we to cast doubt, to throw dust in the eyes of children? (If I lie, let the maple-bug, perched upon my left hand as I write, devour me. It did not.)

For a time we were joined at the firing by Haji-san, a painter friend (since, died); Fukunari-sensei, paper maker and former teacher; as well as several other persons. A firing in Japan is often a festive occasion as well as one of dead

seriousness. The wood-firing of an Anagama, whether large or small, is not a trivial occupation. In the old days specialists handled every phase of firing: Woodsmen who would cut, split and age wood properly before deigning to feed the dragons; Fire Masters with no occupation other than to supervise the feeding of the dragon—men whose job it was to judge when the wood of specific size would be fed, when the small splints of wood would be fed in the side ports to draw the flame through the ware, when to increase the temperature at specific points and upon specific pieces of pottery. When the Fire Master had judged the heat great enough, he would, using a long iron bar, hook out small moon-shaped pieces, all gleaming hot and shining from the holocaust and check these 'draw-trials' for maturity.

Sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century (possibly earlier than the Heian period), the Anagama was introduced to Japan from the Suei potters of Korea, who themselves quite probably had been introduced to the kiln by even earlier Chinese potters. The kiln was simply a slit cut into a hillside and roofed over with its own soil after the slit had been filled with ware. It was then fired from the low end and produced a red ware. After its introduction to Japan, the Anagama gained steadily in sophistication and began to 'shoulder' itself out of the earth, eventually coming nearly two-thirds out of the slope, and was made of special fire-brick. At about the same period, it began to be loaded from the front, later to be bricked up except for a 'fire mouth.'

Also added were two very important developments. The first was the use of high-firing brick which allowed much higher temperature firings. Secondly, the higher wood-firing meant the actual mineral products found in the Aka-Matsu (Red Pine) fuel would be deposited on the ware and melt at peak temperatures, resulting in an actual glaze (glass) coating which would be absorbed somewhat beneath the ware surface as well as on the surface of the ware. The result was a non-absorbent surface, both inside and outside, allowing vessels to be used as jars containing acids or strong alkalis. This firing technique Yakishimé with its brilliant

flashings of color sometimes quite heavily deposited often became among the most beautiful and sought-after ware in Japan. Years later Rikio kindly presented a small pot to us, all properly boxed and signed. It remains one of our few treasures.

For many established potters the day of finally opening a large, now only warm, kiln is a day of festival, as each piece is brought out into the light from the depths of the kiln ... cleaned and polished of the residual ash ... and presented for viewing to the waiting customers. I think we never tired of this special part of making pottery. Digging clay or purchasing clay from a large company is certainly of importance to us, as is the grinding and compounding of colors for glazes. Mixing, wedging and finally throwing clay on the wheel or hand-building are surely of importance. Still, all of these processes do not bring life to primordial clay until the pot emerges in its beauty from the kiln either whole, cracked, or broken. Whatever the result each piece of ware is a part of the whole. It is the culmination of the potter's efforts and the urge to continue.

Within a few days we would pack all the pots and transport them to Saga City not far away and still on Kyushu. Here we would unpack and display everything as our joint exhibition and sale of the products of the kiln of Hashimoto of Ariaké as well as the works of Isao Sanami and Don Morrill from New Brunswick, Canada. The exhibition was well attended by the general public and the media. We sold eighty percent of our work.

We stopped at Inasa-jinja for a few more days before Rikio drove us to the small city of Oita to visit and stay with his friends, a family of soy sauce makers. They lived in a grand house which was a converted Kura a three hundred year-old post and beam construction treasure house. They had used the old frame, added new building technology and furnished it with the works of well-known interior designers. They also operated a computerized brewery with only five employees. Our first evening at the house, we were served Fugu, puffer fish with the violently poisonous liver. For

obvious reasons only certain chefs are permitted to prepare this delicacy ... Delicious!

From Oita we took a ferry directly to the island of Shikoku. For several years we had heard of and admired the writings and work of Masanobu Fukuoka, author of *The Natural Way of Farming*, translated by Frederick P. Metreaud, Publisher: Japan Publications, Inc., 1985. It is only one of several books and many publications by Fukuoka-sensei.

Greeting Sensei, I felt as though I were looking into a small mirror of myself. Although he was quite elderly, he was a very vigorous man and greeted us warmly, leading us to a small guest-house nearby, where we could stay for a time. His actual home was some distance down the mountain in the city where he was living with his sister. That evening in the guest-house we had a most enjoyable conversation, Isao interpreting. Fukuoka-sansei had done a great deal of travelling since beginning his great work more than fifty years before our visit in 1986. He began his work as a plant pathologist and later went to work as a plant inspector. It was during this period that his doubts about the use of fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides began to become a part of his life. His life has been dedicated to teaching and learning. His early work *The One-straw Revolution* had great appeal to younger persons during the late 1960s with its advice on the development of the quarter-acre farm. Masanobu Fukuoka has visited the United States as well as Europe, lecturing and spreading word of his findings and belief in the advantages of natural farming.

It had now become May and time for us to return to New Brunswick. But not before returning to Honshu, visiting our friends Nakayama in their new house and then proceeding to Tokyo once more for a final visit with Isao's father and family.

Each time we have been in Japan, we have always included a trip to Mashiko, Mecca of potters (at least, the potters of our generation and before). Our first trip in 1970 had brought us into contact with Gerd Knapper, at that time a young German potter, now one of the more celebrated

potters of Japan. On a later visit I was privileged to meet the wife of Shoji Hamada, probably the most influential potter of several generations of Japanese as well as European potters throughout the world. It is unfortunate but the potter most connected with Hamada in the early days of their exploration of Mingei, Japanese folk pottery, was a young ceramics engineer and potter, Kenkichi Tomimoto, one of the finest of potters and designers of his generation. Yet he is very often ignored (not denied) in favor of Bernard Leach, the British potter. I find it necessary to mention Tomimoto simply out of respect and courtesy.

Another resident of Mashiko for many years and our very close friend is Keiko Namai, who has visited with us in British Columbia and, of course, with whom we have stayed in Japan several times over the past thirty-two years. Namai is an excellent production potter with little pretensions to ART (which indicates she IS an artist). Her kiln, a Noborigama or multiple-chambered kiln, is on a steep hillside just next to her home. At some slight distance beyond her home, is the small guest-house where we have lived and where friend Carol Ruth stayed during her visit two years ago.

Mashiko is an unpretentious, small city. But it is certainly devoted to pottery, pots and clay and has some of the better Japanese, as well as foreign, potters. The foreigners moved to Mashiko sometime after WW2, probably around the late 1960s when the crafts movement was at one of several peaks within the past 200 years. No doubt, potters of the British Morris movement found their way to Japan early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as did Lafcadio Hearn, the writer, and others.

When we were at Mashiko, there were as many as 650 potters. Apparently, all made a living of some sort, and several of them engaged apprentices from several countries of Europe as well as from Canada and the United States. At the time of our first visit, only a few foreigners spoke fluent Japanese, but on our last visit many were practised speakers as well as translators in a number of languages.

At the New Brunswick Crafts School of Fredericton, we were pleased to meet Tattsuzo Shimaoka, a well-known Japanese potter and formerly a student of Shoji Hamada. Shimaoka was on a lecture tour in Canada at that time, and Isao acted as an interpreter for him at the Craft School in Fredericton. When we had arrived in Mashiko, we stopped by the kiln of Shimaoka. He gave us a tour around the kiln and his studio. We also met a few of the apprentices, working there.

At the time Isao noticed a field of jonquils and asked Shimaoka if they were being raised to eat. He replied that someone had brought a few bulbs to him sometime previously and that these had spread very rapidly throughout the field. Perhaps, both Isao and I felt this an indication of the tremendous success of the Japanese economy. Japan enforces strict laws to allow fields to lie fallow during alternate years and gives government subsidies to encourage this practice. They hope to prevent over-tilling and over-planting of the soil of the small agricultural areas of Japan.

At the home of Namai, we were involved in the loading, sealing and firing of her kiln. But there was a young man who superintended as a Fire-Master who also ran a small coffee shop in the town. Namai also had an Australian woman as an apprentice at that time, as she has had several times over the years from several countries in Europe. Burt Cohen, our dear friend, was one of her apprentices and remains in close contact with her. The firing lasted only three days, since this was a glazed firing.

The opening of Namai's kiln, like that of many kilns, was a period of rejoicing and of meeting. Many persons arrived with gifts (food, usually) to view the new pottery and to buy the latest products of the kiln even before it was opened. Needless to say, Mashiko is heaven for potters, especially when one sees the tremendous volume of pots sold: thousands, no better and no worse than those sold at fairs elsewhere, as well as a few superlative pots, of course.

The coming week we boxed the pots for the annual pottery sale at the Kyoohan center. The entire market area was gaily decorated with green striped shelters supplied for the potters by the municipality. Since this was not the usual courtesy for markets in North America, we were surprised and appreciative. A great many buses had arrived from as far away as Tokyo bringing tourists as well as entire classes of school children. At one side we found a large group of schoolchildren decorating and glazing small pots which they would fire on the spot to be delivered to their schools. It appeared to us that, in spite of the incredible drive to modernize the Japanese economy, many of the older traditions of kindness and simple courtesy remained.

When we returned to St. Ignace, New Brunswick, we found that our house had been broken into. Serious enough ... our following winter's wood, all cut and stacked for drying, had been stolen in our absence.

Well, at least one good event occurred that year. It is one of the best of communal efforts to fire a large kiln with wood. After Leslie, Amy, Micah, and Burt had left us, we fired the kiln with more advanced techniques and knowledge that we had gathered in both Bizen and Mashiko, Japan. In all we fired four times with the local potters and our friends. On one occasion the firing took five days and four nights with a total of eight people. Then after viewing some of the pottery, we repacked the pots and fired again. That time we fired seven days and seven nights. We were very fortunate having enthusiastic friends helping us, chopping wood, feeding fire, bringing food, and keeping us awake.

Isao had her large pots exhibited at Université de Moncton, in their large and well-lighted gallery. She received some very good notice, definitely a plus for her. By this time we had achieved all we had set out to do in New Brunswick and were once more getting itchy feet. Unless one possesses considerable wealth, New Brunswick is not the best place for children to grow. Living in the boondocks has its advantages for adults who have been 'away' but very

few for the growing young as they become older. There is a great wide world out there and children should be exposed to it to grow. Both Ben and Kai had also indicated their interest in attending school. In September 1987 we decided to move west once again. Perhaps the break-in had something to do with the decision. Once upon a time, someone said, "The longer you remain in one place, the more the local shit sticks to you, and your involvement narrows until you feel boxed-in." Before we left, we made an arrangement that stated the kiln was to be used by the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design and by the University of Moncton.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, we met our good friend Carol Wong-Chu. Rather quickly she found us a place to live, a place many might think undesirable but for us in many ways it became a paradise, Matsqui, away down at the end of River Road above Fort Langley on a property owned by Jim H.

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## Matsqui

Were we any closer to the Fraser River, where it runs deep and wide, we would fall in and be eaten ... if monster sturgeon ate people. A tree filled with eagles guarded our dooryard. An abandoned barn, in good condition and an unoccupied A-frame house, new, unoccupied, and somewhat closer to the town road. A small hill of leaking, acid-filled batteries, a few old automobiles (none of ancient vintage), broken machinery, and barrels of unidentified materials soon to be explored. A vast wasteland. A very large Nissen-type steel building. Filled with junk and nearly hidden, a small two-room house attempting to prove its existence waited for us.

A small kitchen downstairs. A bed-sitting room up. Behind the kitchen, a storage room and, just outside the storage room, an abandoned foundation. An entire New World awaiting our molding and adapting hands. Dear Carol Wong-Chu, that most Vancouver-knowledgeable person, had been available to us and had found it.

Matsqui was nowhere. It certainly wasn't Vancouver or Chilliwack. It wasn't Langley. It lay beside the railroad tracks where a large sign indicated we had moved into the riverine boondocks. It informed us that we were on a rail siding named Matsqui, only a few kilometers upriver from Fort Langley, once a trading post on the Fraser River and, when we moved there, a sleepy village.

First things first. Ben and Kai must be enrolled in the local elementary school. Beyond their home-schooling

period in New Brunswick, Ben's only public school experience had been a short time at Rexton and Richibucto, New Brunswick. Kai had never been to school. Now they were faced with an entirely new experience. It appears to me they were not entirely pleased with this change. After all, we had been extremely close as a family since they had been ushered into this world and now the transition would be abrupt. Well, more later.

Very quickly we realized winter would be upon us and we required more room. While it did not take very long to connect our small kiln and potter's wheel, more room was another matter. Since the old foundation at the back of the building had once supported a wooden platform, it seemed a natural place to build an addition. We cleaned the dirt and rubble out from the area and began the process of building both a lower room and an upper room reaching to the second floor. This would be the children's bedroom and accessed through our bedroom. All hands went to work and completed a snug retreat. We also built a small, sheltered garden where the house formed an L at the back. It would quickly provide us with lettuce, cabbage and turnip tops.

Beyond the Nissen-hut garage, we quickly constructed a 6 ft x 8 ft wooden greenhouse for future use. By incredibly good fortune, a large truckload of 20 ft white plastic irrigation pipes had been dropped in the yard. These would form the larger greenhouse more than 20 ft long, 6 ft high, and 8 ft wide. We simply cleared the necessary area and set down 2 x 4 timbers, 8 ft apart and parallel with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch holes drilled 4 ft apart and 3 inches from the ends. In these holes we drove 4 ft pieces of Rebar deeply into the earth. Fastening the irrigation tubing to the holes on one side, we bent them over to form large hoops which went right across and fastened on the far side. These were braced from collapsing by additional tubing along the length of the greenhouse. The ends of the greenhouse were not permanently blocked but allowed to form themselves by the end-drape of the 8 mil plastic cover. The cover was taughtened and fastened with plastic clips not unlike clothespins. Matsqui can become very

hot in summer. Every means possible must be used to discharge excess heat. I must admit that bending down to work on the beds was not easy. In our present greenhouse at Falkland, BC, we have solved this problem by opening a deep ditch down the length of the greenhouse and piling the excess earth on the beds (at Matsqui we would have been working underwater).

We have planted gardens in just about all kinds and consistencies of soil. The stony ground of New England and the Maritimes was always a challenge. We felt that most soils had been so mistreated over the centuries that what they most required was to be rebuilt. For ourselves much of our gardening became, 'building and rebuilding' rather than simply, 'making a garden pretty, pretty.'

The great and glorious exception to our previous experiences of gardening in poor soil was the soil of the land verging the Fraser River at Matsqui. Deep, deep, black soil virtually untouched for many years by tiller, spade or fork. Being very wet, it required a slight drainage as we hand-tilled and planted. Excellent lettuces and carrots of gigantic size sprang up, matched by the broad beans, some nearly twelve inches long and filled to bursting with beans. Isao says, "We had tons of herbs." Well, perhaps not tons but certainly all we could consume and give away to friends. Everything at Matsqui grew three times larger than anything had at New Brunswick's St. Ignace.

Of course, in line with Christian teaching, there were snakes in this paradise ... slugs. Not simply the tiny cute ones we have at Falkland but monster, tropical banana slugs, some over four inches in length and with a commanding girth to boot. At the time I was writing a newsletter, more as an exercise than a money-making proposition. In the letter I mentioned several methods of execution for these beasties and by telephonic communication from an unknown person was informed that my methods were cruel. I felt it was either ourselves or the slugs. Something had to give way and we were bigger. Now, at this late date, I have the perfect answer: "We ate 'em, dipped in batter and fried to a crisp." For a

season, Isao kept a careful count of our deceased slug population. The one-day record was 850 slugs. Well done, intrepid hunter!

Even though we worked at it, selling pottery was not easy. However, we made many friends through Carol Wong Chu including Margaret and Tom Sproule and their children, Marie and Patrick, as well as Xavier, Sam, and Andrew Wong, the potters of the area. We are sorry to write that Margaret has since died. Not long ago we met Andrew Wong again at the University College of Caribou in Kamloops.

Our only large sales at that time was at the annual Japanese Festival at Powell Street, Vancouver, during July, and another at Surrey. I believe the Powell Street Festival is especially dear to us. We certainly met many friends there including our friends Inaba from Summerland. Lyn Crompton, a lawyer and activist for native persons, had a gallery at Fort Langley. She sold a number of pieces for us.

When it came time to move from Matsqui because Jim had sold the property, Marni and Lavern Loewen moved us with their big truck all the way up into the Okanagan Valley outside of the town of Armstrong to Stepney Crossroad in the minicipality of Spallumcheen. Carole Ruth and Burt Cohen had found a house for us. Another ideal location, where we could develop all of our interests: a large run-down house with twenty-five acres of land. Carol and Burt had cleaned the old house for us before we had arrived there from Matsqui. We were certainly grateful. It may be challenging but no great pleasure to move into a dirty old house.

## Paradiddle Farm, Spallumcheen

**1990.** Again, by the railroad tracks. This time, only ten meters away. Fortunately, the trains ran infrequently and we were often lulled to sleep through dreams of adventure by the clack, clack, and clack of the rail cars as they rolled across the welded joints of the tracks. The house was not small and that was a plus for us. We would fill it within a short time, as we always have. A short back hall reached from a sagging back step, followed by a kitchen of reasonable size, a bathroom and laundry area, and then the living room, reaching clear across the width of the house. Our bedroom was forward on the right with a small storage room and the stairs leading to three bedrooms. At the front of the house was a porch which, with certain alterations, would serve as our studio. We had seen a large shed cum chicken coop near the end of the property, and of this we planned to make a larger and more permanent studio.

One of the many dangers besetting the studio potter (in addition to poisonous materials and physical injuries) is the dust released by drying clays and other materials. At Paradiddle Farm the first studio was just outside the front door of the house. Opening and closing the door posed a danger. We purchased for \$40.00 a much used furnace exhaust blower and installed it close to our working area. When operated, its suction was powerful enough to make opening the door to the house a considerable effort. The blower certainly filled our requirements and more. This

studio worked well enough, but we felt the need of a gas kiln as well as larger studio and clay preparation areas.

At this point with my back returning to some normalcy after a terrifying bout with sciatica that kept me flat on the floor of the living room giving orders, I found I had prostate cancer. While hardly a happy circumstance, the cancer has behaved reasonably well. Feeling that we all needed a vacation, both Isao's father and friend Rikio Hashimoto sent us money. What did we require, more than a vacation? Why, a used tiller, a canoe, and a complete used wood-working shop to fill a vacant garage. Around this time we also bought a few dozen barred rock chicks and not long after, a pair of genuine Swiss Alpine Goats (of course, upper case out of respect for nobility). These animals came from artist Ann Kipling and Leonard Epp. Both have since become dear friends of ours and have been of great assistance to Isao in her further development as an artist. Since I continued to be in pain much of the time, the burden of the work in setting in fell upon Isao, Ben and Kai. They built a large kitchen table which has since migrated to the kitchen of Leslie, Amy and Micah Cohen. Kai acquired a black, lab-cross farm dog named Edo.

Earlier on I wrote of Hanazono Daigaku and 'Buddy' Nakase who became a Nakayama through marriage and adoption to Sumiko Nakayama. They have had two children: Ai, the younger, and Hina, who came to live with us for one year. She was fourteen years old and would attend Pleasant Valley Secondary School (PVSS) in Armstrong with Ben and Kai.

Subsequent to Hina's arrival, Isao became involved with the Japanese student exchange program through Okanagan University College and also became a Japanese language monitor through local school boards. This employment lasted about five years and then school budget cuts eliminated the paid monitor programs. Instead the school boards engaged a few Japanese without work permits as volunteers. While the loss of the small income was important, it did not appreciably slow down Isao's efforts.

During the years from 1993 to 1995 after Hina had left, we hosted two more students: Yasué (eighteen years old) remained with us only one month before going to Okanagan University College at Kelowna where she said, “I can’t work hard there because they have so much play time.” She returned to Japan and is now married and with two children at last count. Ai Yamamoto (sixteen years old) was our second and last Japanese student. She was the daughter of a friend of Rikio Hashimoto. Ai remained with us to complete grades ten and eleven before returning home. At that time Benjamin went to work, solo, in Japan for ten weeks at his grandfather’s machine shop in Tokyo.

At this point I had best work in something of what we learned through Hina, Yasué and Ai about the changes in Japan during the past twenty-eight years. Many of the changes may appear quite trivial to Western eyes. I assure you they are not. For centuries a cultural habit among Japanese women had been to coyly cover the mouth with the hand rather than reveal the teeth. One may give many reasons for this custom: embarrassment, bad teeth, bad breath, but especially a fear of revealing oneself or showing sharp teeth as an aggressive gesture. However, except perhaps among very old women this gesture has virtually disappeared.

Younger women as well as young men now dress in the uniforms identified with Western persons and have adopted similar gestures. Rather than exhibit a freedom of life, these new habits appear to suggest a vague, underlying fear. Take clothing, for example: blue jeans originated in the prisons of North America where they were made by the thousands of pairs and sold outside in Cheap-Jack shops. This clothing has now become the universal uniform of youth and is now sold as designer jeans in expensive shops. Although not made in prisons per se, the clothing is often made offshore where very low wages are paid to immigrant workers.

During WW2 we were taught that the Japanese school together like fish without individuality. Today the so-called individualistic North Americans adopt the same behavior.

Few young persons dare to walk anywhere alone but must always be in a crowd of their peers. This tendency also appears to be true among older persons.

Among Japanese a cultural habit is to avoid 'blowing one's own horn.' Others must make the compliment rather than oneself; presumably others will recognize one's skills and abilities. This idea, of course, is in complete contradiction to North American attitudes. Isao told me that both Hina and Ai had a hard time at PVSS because they expected others to speak for them as would have happened in Japan. Both Hina and Ai said: "Here, everyone speaks only about themselves." Isao explained to them, "In Japan people boosted others because they knew others would boost them in return."

For the first three months from their arrival, both Hina and Ai giggled and giggled. However, on the day of the fourth month except when they spoke to Isao, they began to speak fluent English with a slight Japanese accent. On her return to Japan, Hina graduated from Meiji University in biology and has closely involved herself in a children's English learning organization. Ai went back to Japan temporarily and returned to Canada after a short stay in the US. She then returned to Japan permanently and became involved with promoting theatres for children. She finds great use for her excellent English skills.

During my bout with prostate cancer, I had a small apartment in Vancouver that allowed me to be near Vancouver General Hospital for daily radiation exposure (a machine with which I had been familiar at High Voltage Engineering Corporation and at Harvard Collage Cyclotron Laboratory, never dreaming I would become a patient). Hina stayed with me for a short time and spent her day roaming all over Vancouver. Her wandering caused me some slight concern but I had other worries at that time and Hina did well. Several days during my stay in Vancouver, I found myself strolling all over town, especially in areas where stone houses had been built. From our years in New Brunswick, I had been in occasional correspondence with David Suzuki

and had suggested that, in view of the forest destruction, it might be best to push the construction of stone housing. David wrote back that there were very few stone houses in Vancouver. Having little else to do, I discovered over fifty houses, all of cut stone, work done principally by Italian stonemasons. The rape of the forests of British Columbia and the poor forestry practices have been occasioned simply by the fact that the trees were there and wood was cheap and quick to form. Most species quickly deteriorate as well in the wet climate. I recall in this context a conversation I had many years ago with an Italian scientist who was visiting me: "I'm very much surprised at all of the wooden houses in America. We have very few, having destroyed all of our forests centuries ago." I often receive great lessons from short conversations.

At Stepney Crossroad, Isao had found the clay soil too hard for a spade. She had instead punched small holes in the turf which she filled with manure and compost, planted with the many small seedlings we had carried from Matsqui and carefully tended. In the meantime Ben borrowed a tiller from our landlord and attacked the heavy soil until the tiller broke. Isao, Ben and Kai transplanted the plants into the new garden and produced bountiful crops. At this point we found it necessary to build another greenhouse, this time on a mound of earth to keep its feet dry. The new greenhouse was of wood covered with Koroplast, a polyfilm corrugated sandwich, quite light, very strong, and with excellent light transmission for up to five years. While Koroplast was somewhat expensive, it had good survival qualities and reduced the number of wooden braces in the greenhouse. By this time Benjamin had well tilled the main garden and was producing a good crop for fall and winter. We sold a limited amount of vegetables and eggs at the local farmer's market.

As soon as we had got our farming projects established, we began making clay. Of course the term is a misnomer. One does not make clay in fewer than several millennia of the erosion and transport of rock particles. While it is the

general practice of potters to purchase clay ready compounded of several materials, boxed and, presumably, aged, it has been our practice, wherever possible, to compound and age our own clay. We have thus created a 'body' with which we are thoroughly familiar and which we may trust not to crack or form bubbles at our chosen temperature. Nowadays Burt Cohen compounds the clay for us. At Paradiddle Farm, however, we used a very ancient and well-proven method. We dug a large pit to a point beneath the anticipated frost line. This we lined with heavy plastic and filled with our mixture. After watering it well, we began to mix the clay with our bare feet, a process not much different from that used in Asia and Arizona by native potters. We were able, because of the press of other affairs, to allow the water-covered clay body to mature over time, much of it for a year. We added more body several times, as we used the older clay. We have learned it is best to cover the clay with not much more than 1/8 inch of water and to attempt to maintain that depth while frequently turning the mass of clay from bottom to top. If one looks carefully, one may see tremendous action take place throughout the clay surface, encouraging bacterial action which matures the clay and often results in what the old-time potters named 'stinkers,' as well as considerably improving the plasticity essential to excellent wheel-throwing qualities.

In this connection several years ago a young researcher in an American university published a paper in which she put forth the bare bones of a concept which suggested that such conditions on the thin film of water (as Brownian Motion?) may have been the origins of life on earth. The Primordial Stew? This intriguing suggestion seems to put the cart before the horse. (I suspect that decomposing bodies in the 'mud' produce methane, which is used as 'fuel' by bacteria for continual development when kept moist.)

At Paradiddle Farm, we also built a propane gas-fired kiln of moderate size to be used principally for varying reduction (techniques often used to decrease/increase oxygen to the ware and thereby change surface color). After

casting a large concrete foundation, we welded a boxlike frame of 2 inch angle-irons and stacked it with K-23 insulating brick, built a short chimney and cut burner ports. Because of circumstances we will reveal later, we fired this kiln only three times ... all with success. We made hundreds of tiles: tiles with fish designs for the bath room; tiles with gargoyles for the wall behind the wood stove; and tiles with vegetables and wild animals for the kitchen table. Isao was fortunate to have an exhibition at the Vernon Public Art Gallery of several of her large pots that were fired in the propane kiln.

Even though we loved them dearly, we had to sell the goats, as I was under radiation treatment in Vancouver and Isao could not handle all the work herself. However, the goats inspired the name 'Paradiddle Farm.' From my musician friends of many years past (notably Ernest and Robert Zief, Hank Donahue, and other drummers), I had learned that the paradiddle was a complex drumming technique. When we had many small kid goats, we built a playground for them and spent hours watching their antics, and listening, as they leaped over everything in sight, twisting and turning in the air. Having these animals was a valuable experience for all of us at Paradiddle Farm. Ben and Isao became expert at milking. Isao and I honed our veterinary skills. All hail to 'Chief,' who was lovely, friendly and delicious.

I mentioned earlier that the front porch studio, while useful for a time, would not be adequate for the long term. The ancient chicken coop opposite the goat barn was not in bad shape except for the roof. We bought all of the steel roofing materials and Kai and Ben rebuilt the entire roof including several of its beams. After the inside was painted, water and power were laid in from the pump house nearby and we moved our equipment from the other studio. At the time through the kindness of Sarah, PVSS art teacher, the town provided us with six kick wheels (foot-operated potter's wheels) and a electric wheel to teach some high school students. In addition to Isao's pottery art class for

children for a short period of time, these potter's wheels provided excellent merry-go-arounds for the young goats.

1995. The owner of our Stepney Crossroad property lost his employment and decided to move into our house. We had to find another place. Burt Cohen and Samantha in the meantime had moved to St. Lucia, West Indies, on a consultancy. We packed and moved to downtown Armstrong to Samantha's house. When we drove back to Stepney for a visit, we found the garden destroyed and the house and barn razed.

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### 1995 and Beyond

The summer of 1995 was a difficult time for Isao; Kai decided to quit Pleasant Valley Secondary School and went to Japan by himself for eight weeks; Ben moved to Kelowna to attend Okanagan University College; Ai Yamamoto returned to Japan. It was a first time for Isao and I to live by ourselves in a small town house. Although we cultivated a circular vegetable garden and several small rectangular beds and transplanted many plants from the Paradiddle Farm, we were lost in the town. We set up a potter's wheel in a storage room beside the house but the surrounding walls inhibited us from doing any work. Isao spent several hours a day walking around the town for exercise and began painting with pastels at various sites. I peddled my bicycle up and down the town and usually end up at the local library.

After returning from Japan, Kai enrolled in the Global Institute in Bellingham, Washington. It is an alternative school run by six young and enthusiastic teachers of various backgrounds. Kai was interviewed by three teachers and accepted. He moved to Bellingham and fixed up a tiny tree house on the property of one of his teachers. Isao says she does not recall how Kai managed to survive financially, since we sent very little money each month. Kai not only studied ("This is the first time I ever studied," he said), he worked fixing up the property of his school, a teacher, and a friend's parents' in exchange for meals. We could see gradually Kai

become a whole person again. Meanwhile, Ben decided to move to Edmonton to attend the University of Alberta.

Isao was restless at Armstrong. It was not long before Burt and Sam returned from St. Lucia and needed their house. We were offered for three months the house of friends Desmond and Angela high on Demorest Rd above Armstrong. That house was sold rather quickly. Jean and David found another house for us at Falkland, a small rural community not far from either Armstrong or Vernon, BC, where we are now living. At the time we moved to Falkland, the house and especially the lot seemed fairly commodious. Since then, with our usual flair for materials floating in around us, we find the house somewhat crowded: Nothing is forever or everything is forever.

Ben continued his studies at the University of Alberta, but he changed his major from environmental science to Japanese and French languages. He obtained scholarships and went to Quebec and France/Europe to study French during his stay in the university. Kai graduated from high school in Bellingham, went to Montreal and subsequently moved back to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to live and to work with our friend, Marc Graff. Kai has virtually rebuilt both his life and the small cabin in which he lived at Concession.

We made several trips to Edmonton while Ben was there and rediscovered the beauty of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. We also visited Kai in Montreal. The three of us rented a car for a week and drove to Swampscott, Lynn, and Sandersfield, Massachusetts, to visit with Max and Leola, and to Nova Scotia to visit Marc Graff (Marc wasn't home).

Here in Falkland we have a self-expanding vegetable garden; a summer pottery studio equipped with a potter's wheel, a slab roller, a electric kiln, and a table saw; and an ancient shed (ancient for a town so new). The shed is Isao's consistent painting subject. Several fruit trees also supply us with fruit in season.

When we were living at Stepney Crossroad, Ben began developing and printing his own black and white film as a

part of his school project and has become an excellent photographer. We continue this project at Falkland. In our bathroom I built several collapsible shelves, installed a reasonable ventilation system and made a dark-room. We spend considerable time taking pictures and developing and printing them ourselves. It has been my/our aim to always continue learning new techniques for old skills and to expand these lessons into more advanced technologies as quickly as is necessary. It appears to me that much of teaching is aimed at 'de-encouraging' learning, of fitting students into the past rather than into a self-actualizing future as members of communities.

1997. Isao went to Hokkaido, Japan, as an interpreter with a group of students from Highland Park Elementary School of Armstrong. I joined her in Tokyo. We travelled down through Honshu to visit old haunts at Kyoto and way stations all the way down to Ariake on Kyushu, where we were amazed at the new house and huge studio of Rikio and Fujiko Hashimoto, as well as their new and larger kiln.

At Tsuyama we stayed with Sumiko and Masamichi Nakayama, parents of Hina, in their new and sumptuous mansion. A lovely house designed by the sister of Sumiko, architect. The Nakayamas closed their third generation Kamaboko shop and now operate a real estate office. Of course, when we returned to Kyoto we had to visit the new and superlatively grand, railway station. Surely one of the world's great sights, the station contains the usual restaurants and bars as well as a huge stage with incredible acoustics for entertainment, where we heard Taiko drumming. We found many additional changes in Japan. This time a cup of coffee was 800 yen; 1,500 yen at a quality coffee house with classic music and with a time limit (thirty minutes or order something more). However, the cost of public baths didn't go up much; instead there were fewer public baths, presumably, because there were more private in-house baths. In my view such seemingly slight changes destroy the sense of community and replace it with Western 'dog eat dog' competition.

In 1999 Isao returned again to Japan for eight days to see her father and her class-mates from elementary school. From this visit Isao got quite a shock. She informed me that fewer people were travelling on the trains in Tokyo. When in 1992 Isao and Kai had visited, they had been amazed at the number of foreigners, mostly South American and Middle Eastern. In 1999 they were all gone. On the highway there were fewer automobiles as well; it used to take over two hours to drive 100 km, but now it took only one hour or so. She also noted several abandoned construction sites on roads as well as half-completed buildings and a number of empty buildings and shops. She saw many young people in dark apparel, not in their school uniforms, sitting silently, head down, a few young men talking to themselves loudly and frantically with cellular phones attached to an ear. She also met several beggars, not only around the train station but even in the small town outside of Tokyo where her father resides (for Tokyo, this is a relatively suburban area). The last time she saw beggars was during the 1950s among the wounded war veterans. Japan was dark and cold.

July 4, 2000, for my eightieth birthday, Isao bought two tickets to Lynn for which I am eternally grateful ... or not. Returning to my birthplace after more than forty-five years was not an unalloyed pleasure. Personal experience during the intervening years tended to make a return unnecessary and hardly a part of my future. I stepped down the plank from the aircraft at Logan as though this were my last mile and was met by Arnold Trachtman and his daughter Maxima, dear friends from a now distant past.

Returning to Cambridge for a few days, I saw no great changes although undoubtedly they had occurred in my absence. Harvard Yard was still there, middle-class, outmoded, yearning for a greater glory. Isao and I sat beneath a tree in the Yard and watched the passing crowd of students. Gone appeared to be that great sense of excitement I remembered from the Vietnam years. It was as though the students felt they would without protest sink into the corporate world, perhaps having made their peace,

perhaps in despair. Their parents had betrayed themselves. They had not followed up the promises of the 1960s and had left their children to occupy a political and social vacuum, a vacuum of fear, conscious or not, which drove parents and children to excess.

After two days in Cambridge, we passed through Lynn quickly, seeing very little, and drove to Swampscott. Staying with Leola and Max always a pleasure. They arranged a meeting with two former students of mine when I had the Marblehead studio. Both Mark and Alexis had become successful in their lives. Married and with children, Mark was with Ox-fam and Alexis had become a nurse complete with son and wife. Although I inquired about their younger brother Johnny, little information was forthcoming except that he was living in Florida. Their mother Ruth had changed no more than myself. Their father David, a Boston architect, had died some years previously when I was out of the country. Benjamin Fishman came to see us at Leola and Max's house. We drove to Gloucester to visit with Vincent Ferrini, poet and playwright and long-time friend from my much earlier youth. It is always pleasant to know that old friends continue to survive, and that one has made new enemies as one's ideas mature (also one is a bit uneasy at disturbing the fabric of the past).

Marblehead, where I had established studios in three moves, had certainly changed. It had become even more of a bedroom community complete with airline pilots, stewards and other 'upwardly mobile' and dull people. Just as it always had been only of deeper concentration. Marblehead, Massachusetts, had always had at least two communities: the wealthy, yachting crowd who had a belief that they controlled the town; and the fisher community (the real controllers, *sotto voce*). As New England towns go, Marblehead is a very old town, established as an escape route of persons rejected from Salem, Massachusetts. One in particular was reputed to have lived in a tun (a very large barrel). Iconoclasm has not yet died One hopes it will

survive, so long as there is a Peach, a Burns, a Sewell, a Frost surviving in the molasses clogging the town.

We returned from Cape Ann to Gloucester, Marblehead, and Swampscott. Off to Cambridge again. Since Isao had not visited the Boston Museum of Fine Arts the last time we were east, a visit was a must. In the area Isao took a great many fine photographs of the architecture in Lynn. Our time was growing short and we had hardly seen Lynn. Almost as though I no longer had an umbilical connection. Now I become bored as I write about a Lynn with its large Hispanic population I do not know.

From foreigners in 1630 to foreigners in 2000 of which I have become one. Although it had required less than a century for Spanish imperialism to destroy centuries of Central American civilizations, it is odd it has required more than 200 years for Hispanics to find their way north to Lynn, Massachusetts. I expect that the movement speaks more of the opportunities for jobs during periodic American warfare than it does for Spanish acculturation. What a world it might have become had the Maya gotten beyond Florida and the Gulf of Mexico before their destruction.

Nearly three years have passed and we are still here in Falkland. Benjamin Sanami Morrill having graduated from the University of Alberta is living and working on the tiny island of Himeshima off the coast of Japan where he is beginning his third year as a teacher, gardener, and municipal facilitator. Kai Winthrop Morrill is currently in Thailand, where he has been working for several weeks with Burton Cohen as ceramics consultants. Isao has added considerable depths to her reputation as both a potter and a painter. Me? Well, it becomes nearly spring. The greenhouse is just beginning to awaken from its winter's sleep. The snow has pulled back from the garden and the arriving red-winged blackbirds are madly pursuing the remnants of last year's sunflower seeds.

In Falkland we have a community learning center where Isao is very active. She also teaches potting and art one day a week at the local elementary school and finds it very

pleasing as well as an expanded learning opportunity for herself. She enjoys walking about Falkland and meeting her students: "Hello, Isao." This past spring in the community of Armstrong she had her first solo exhibition of pastels, line drawings and watercolors which was very well received and did a bit better than break even. She is also exhibiting very large pots at Art Ark in Kelowna. All of these efforts have led to a wider acceptance in these communities. Isao is also a member of the Vernon Outdoors Club and spends much time hiking through the surrounding mountains. Her bell and whistle keep bears and cougars at bay.

When Kai returned here nearly two years ago, we built a greenhouse; weird construction with the bows of 3 inch angle-iron loaned to us by Dennis rising nearly 8 ft high. As I had found bending and stooping in the greenhouse difficult, we dug a ditch nearly 3 feet deep and so have solved much of the problem. Last summer we had a very good crop of peppers and zucchini and other vegetables. Usually we would freeze these vegetables for the winter. The freezer became inoperative. Instead, therefore, we built eight screen-cells with covers, sliced our crop of tomatoes and zucchini, and placed the entire business on the steel roof of our studio to dry in the sun. A small solution with big dividends: we had no need for a freezer with outmoded refrigerant; the hydro bills were reduced as well as storage space for the product. Each one-liter jar holds five pounds of dried tomatoes and zucchini.

It seems I have come to a summation. Two thoughts: Firstly, there exists a great gulf between reality and myth. We may believe in our 'independence,' in our 'individuality.' We are taught these concepts as sacred writ provided that we do not overstep the bounds and become outside the law either as individuals or as independent persons. And so we play this little game with ourselves and with our generations. To become truly an individual and independent, we must give up all concepts of power and thereby gain the power of community, of moving toward oneness. Not only do I

feel this is the next stage of human development, it may well be the final stage.

Secondly, because of our insane rush to industrial development, we have polluted the water and the general atmosphere of the entire earth. Science cannot help us. Scientists, no matter their individual sincerity, have little power in a competitive society. Scientists become a commodity to be bought or sold like any other. The more a scientist has to lose, the greater his opportunity to be suborned. Surely this short 'Essay' in a life is not the end.

"Let me make my life simple  
And straight like a flute of reed."

From *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore

Author: Donald Herbert Morrill  
Falkland, British Columbia, Canada.  
March 10, 2002





*Herbert Horace Weld  
and Maude Alice  
MacBurney Weld  
(1895)*



*Madelin Alice Weld Morrill Dill (1934)*



*Donald Herbert Morrill (1926)*



*(Above): Don's 50th birthday with the students of Hanazono College, Kyoto, Japan, 1970.*



*(Left): Don and Isao at Kyoto Goshō, Japan, 1972.*

*(Below): Don at the Noborigama (hill climbing kiln) of Tsuguo Kawai and Keiko Namai. Koisago, Japan, 1972.*





(Above): Garden view. Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, Canada, 1974.



(Left): Don at the kiln. Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, 1973.

(Below): Lori and Pam at The Old Howard, Meteghan River, 1974.





*(Above): Benji and Isao in the garden.  
Pig's Alley, Meteghan, Nova Scotia,  
1977.*

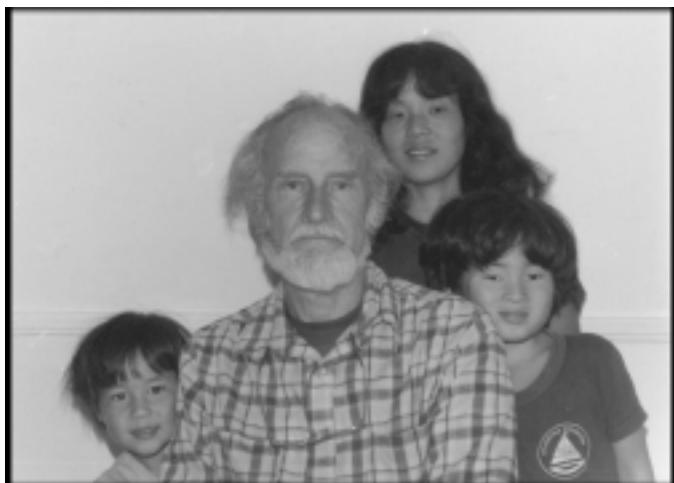
*(Right): Don and Benji in front of the  
tea house. Pig's Alley, Meteghan, Nova  
Scotia, 1978.*

*(Below): Don at the studio. Pig's Alley,  
Meteghan, Nova Scotia, 1978.*





(Above): *Don with a cabbage. Cameron's Mill, New Brunswick, 1987.*



(Above): *The Family. Cameron's Mill, N.B., 1982.*

(Kai, Don, Isao, Benji).

(Below): *The kiln firing crew. Cameron's Mill, N.B., 1986.*

(Benji, Burt, Micah, Amy, Isao).





(Above): *Opening the kiln. Cameron's Mill, N.B., 1987.*  
(Geraldine, Don, Hudson's daughters, and pots).



(Above): *Kiln construction. Cameron's Mill, N.B., 1986. (Burt and Don).*  
(Below): *Unloading kiln. Jo-An kiln, Inasa-jinja, Saga, Japan, 1986.*  
(Don and Rikio)

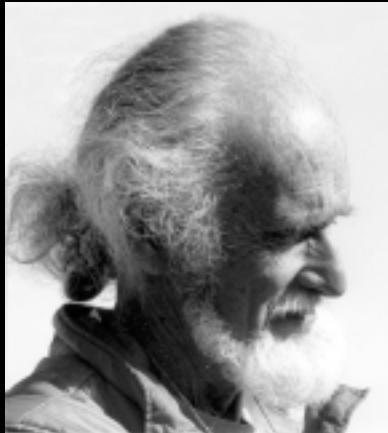




*(Above): Kai and Don with kids. Stepney X Rd., Armstrong, British Columbia, Canada, 1992.*

*(Below): Don in the greenhouse, Falkland, British Columbia, 2000.*





From dishwasher to Harvard physicist, ceramics engineer and organic gardener, these pages provide a glimpse into the life of an exceptional human being.

Poet and potter from Lynn, Mass., Don Morrill is an activist in extraordinary times. Growing up in the 1920s and 30s, Don writes about his childhood experiences with vivid clarity. We travel with him through life from Pillings Pond in the 20s to Canada, Africa, and beyond.

A family history, a Lynn guidebook, a kiln manual. This is an honest recording of the passage of time; the humor, the struggle, and the gardens.

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